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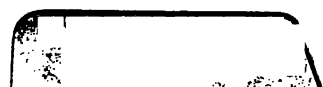
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[Gifford, James]
AN
ELUCIDATION
OF
THE UNITY OF GOD,
DEDUCED FROM
SCRIPTURE AND REASON,
ADDRESSED TO
CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.
FIFTH EDITION, ENLARGED.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

MATT. xv, 9.

Unus enim est Deus, qui fecit cœlum, et terram, mare, et omnia quæ sunt
in ipsis; et unus Jesus Christus, filius ejus unigenitus, cujus amicitia
fruar. IGNATIUS, VID. COTELER. PATR. APOSTOL. Vol. I, p. 173.

To which is subjoined,

A

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR,
TO HIS GRACE
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.
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TO
THE SOCIETY
OF
UNITARIAN CHRISTIANS
AT
MONTROSE IN NORTH BRITAIN,
THIS TRACT

IS

VERY RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

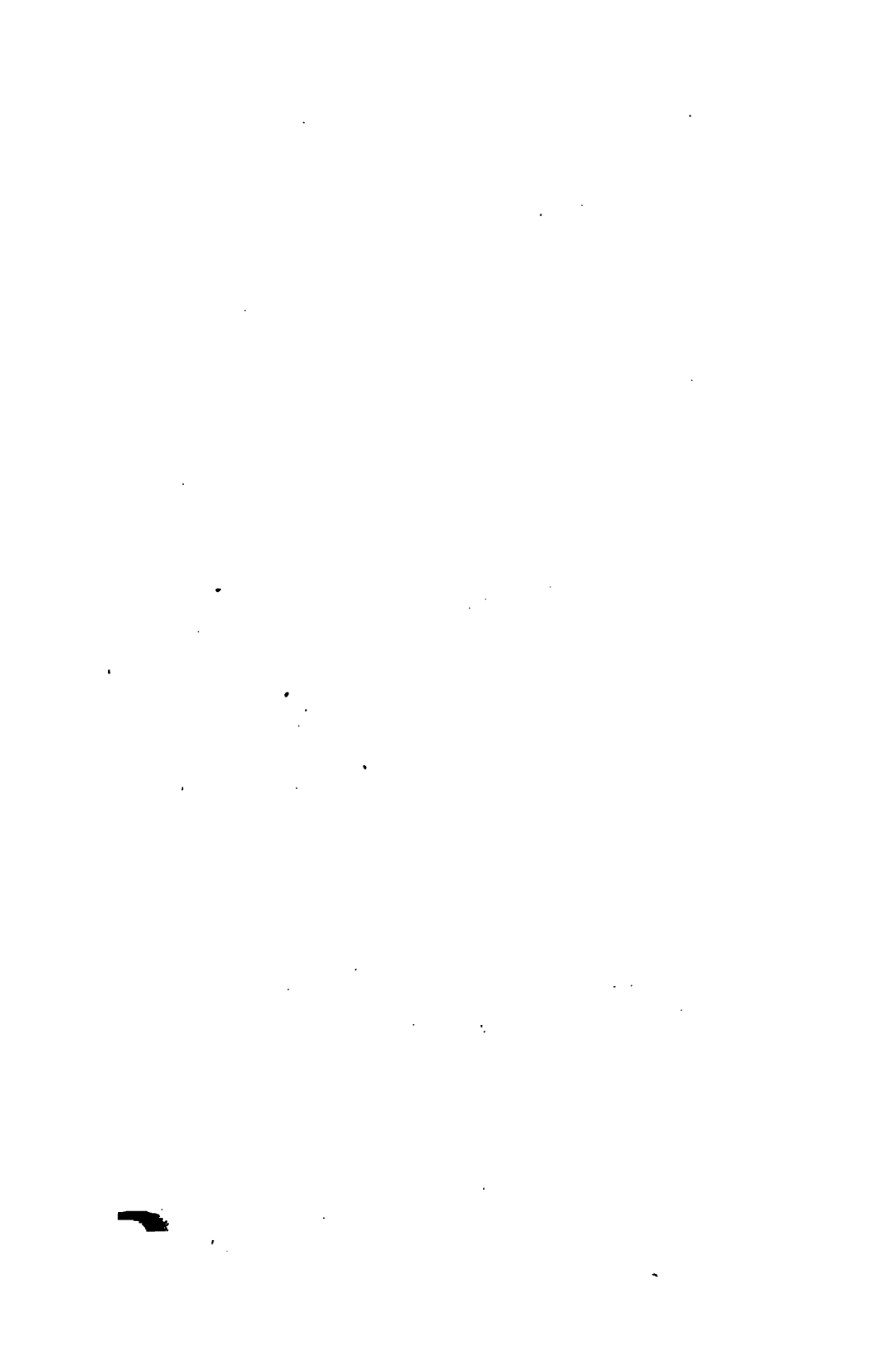
BY

THEIR AFFECTIONATE HUMBLE SERVANT,

JAMES GIFFORD.

*Girton, Cambridgeshire,
July 25, 1787.*

*The God of all grace, Who hath called us unto his eternal glory,
by Christ Jesus, — make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle
you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.
Amen.—1 Pet. v, 10, 11.*



THE Great Articles which we have endeavoured to prove directly and unexceptionably, are these.

That, The Father Almighty Alone, is SUPREME, and the only proper Object of Religious Worship—from the clearest declarations of our Saviour, the Prophets, and Apostles.

That, There is the strongest reason to believe, from the Evidence produced, that, by the holy Ghost, the inspired writers generally mean the Divine Influence, Power, or the spiritual Gifts of God, even the Father himself.—That, however, supposing the holy Spirit to be a Person, and different from the Father; we find no Command or Precedent whatsoever, in the Sacred Records, for the offering any distinct Worship or Glory to the Holy Spirit.

That, Christ expressly acknowledged himself INFERIOR to the Father: that the Circumstances recorded by his Apostles, of his Life, Death, Resurrection, and Exaltation, manifest him to be so: and that we are most plainly directed, in the holy Scriptures, to offer Divine Worship to God, the Father, only, in the Name, and as the Disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All points of less moment are left at large in this Tract.

the same time, the fact that the same person can be both a subject and an object of a relation, and that the same relation can be both a subject and an object of a relation, is a fact which is not captured by the traditional logic. This is the reason why the traditional logic is inadequate for the study of the human mind. The traditional logic is based on the assumption that the world is composed of discrete objects, and that the relations between these objects are also discrete. However, the human mind is not composed of discrete objects, and the relations between its parts are not discrete either. The human mind is a continuous whole, and its parts are interconnected in a complex and dynamic way. This is why the traditional logic is inadequate for the study of the human mind. The traditional logic is based on the assumption that the world is composed of discrete objects, and that the relations between these objects are also discrete. However, the human mind is not composed of discrete objects, and the relations between its parts are not discrete either. The human mind is a continuous whole, and its parts are interconnected in a complex and dynamic way. This is why the traditional logic is inadequate for the study of the human mind.

P R E F A C E.

THE Author, in first attempting to Elucidate the *Unity of the Deity*, had no other than an anxious desire of coming at *Truth*, and satisfying himself: and in the resolution since of Publishing the result, sincerely professes, that he has not the most distant intention of fomenting divisions amongst his Christian Brethren*; but, on the contrary, is solicitous to promote their

* The *Maxim* that we ought not to expose our Religious Opinions to the World, however just they may be, *if repugnant to those which Prevail* (lest we should thereby officiously disturb the Consciences of others, and perhaps endanger the tranquillity of our Country), *is certainly false*; for on this Principle neither the *Reformation*, nor the original promulgation of the *Gospel* itself, can possibly be justified.

inward Peace, and to forward the right understanding of the holy Scriptures. *Not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the Truth commending himself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God**. For which purpose, he has endeavoured to point out plainly, and as concisely as a pretty full inquiry would allow, the pure tenets of *primitive Christianity*, as they were delivered by its heavenly Author and his Apostles on this most important Subject; and to free *their* Doctrines from an unnatural mixture of *Gentile Philosophy*†; from the distracting remains of ancient Bigotry and Superstition, the gloomy springs of that Charge of Inconsistency and Contradiction, which has

* 2 Cor. iv, 2.

† “Christianity itself has very much suffered by being blended up with Gentile Philosophy. The Platonic System first taken into Religion, was thought to have given matter for some early heresies in the Church.”—Dean Swift, Works, vol. xvi, p. 64.

been so often and so profanely cast upon them.

By an impartial inspection into *Scripture*, it will be found, that the *absolute Unity* of God is clearly shown in that unsullied Fountain;—that it must be our own prejudices which distort our view of this glorious and momentous *Truth*;—that our blessed Saviour expressly taught it, and never assumed *Divine* Worship to *himself*, nor left it in command that *he* should receive such after his departure hence; but instructed Mankind (most justly) to believe in him and his Precepts, as the sacred and anointed *Messenger* of the Most High, The *Mediator*, the *Son* of God, as he is emphatically named in the Scriptures*. And his Apostles, we find, firmly accord with him; asserting, with the utmost pre-

* The *Angel* says (Luke i, 35), *he shall be called the Son of God*. This illustrious Denomination, however,

cision and simplicity, *as the knowledge of*

by no means implies any *Equality of the Son*, to his *God and Father*.—See Heb. v, 7, 8.

The Terms, *Gods, Sons of God, Children of God, &c.*, so frequently found in Scripture, are, in general, *Figurative, or Comparative*, and, of course, will not admit of a *literal* Construction; as may be observed in *Exod. vii, 1; Matt. xxiii, 9; Luke vi, 35; Acts xvii, 29; 1 Cor. viii, 5; 2 Cor. vi, 18, &c.* Our blessed Master, in his present Exalted State, may, indeed, be called *a God, or Lord*, in the *Inferior or Subordinate* Sense. (We even find such Titles sometimes applied, but in a *more Inferior* Sense, to other highly Dignified Characters in Scripture, as before, *Exod. vii, 1; and again, 1 Kings xviii, 7; John x, 34, 35*). But the Appellation, thus properly taken, conveys no Idea of any *Equality* with the *Father of All*, Who is the *ONLY True God, The Supreme LORD of lords, and GOD of gods*; and *as Such*, most certainly, would our Saviour have his *Father* considered.—*Matt. xi, 25.* The Heathen had *Gods* many, and *Lords* many; but We (Christians) have but *One God*, even the *FATHER*; and but *One Lord-Mediator*, or *Intercessor*, between *GOD* and *Man*, even *JESUS CHRIST*.

Thus much may be further observed, that the Angel evidently grounds our Saviour's Title (*Son of God*) on his *miraculous Conception*, and the great Dignity and Importance of the Spiritual Office which God was pleased afterwards to confer upon him; as may be seen in *Luke i, 30—35.*

the Truth, that There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.—1 Tim. ii, 4, 5.

Convinced that these Principles form the basis of the Gospel, the writer has endeavoured in all humility to vindicate those sacred Doctrines, which declare, that *Religious Worship*, in the proper Sense, is due to Almighty God alone, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Great Parent of All! *in whom we live, and move, and have our Being*; and upon whom *only*, the Preservation, Comfort, Peace, and Happiness of the whole Universe eternally depend. *For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things**, *To Whom be Glory for ever. Amen.*—Rom. xi, 36.

* Viz. “*From Him all Things derive their Being, by Him (through His Care and Providence) all Things are Preserved and Governed, to His Glory all Things shall terminate.*”—Dr. Clarke.

On the Subject before the Reader, there is not the most distant necessity for *forced* Interpretations of the Bible; he will find, with satisfaction, that the many Scriptural texts, cited or referred to (*and upon which we must depend*), are by no means strained, as is too common, to support a favourite Hypothesis; but naturally and directly applied, fully in point, and, taken collectively, it is hoped, they will have their due effect on every unprejudiced Mind. For surely it will be thought altogether incredible, that *so great a cloud of witnesses* should be found in our holy records, evidently and repeatedly enforcing an express Article of Faith, important to the World in the highest degree, which after all (if we are to believe the generality of our present Teachers) falls short of the Truth!

The Author is fully as desirous of *receiv-*

ing light, as of trying to communicate it: if, therefore, any *material* Errors should be discovered in this Tract, he sincerely wishes, for his own safety, and the satisfaction of others, that they may be detected and exposed without ceremony* (*excepting*, however, against all Cavil and Subterfuge†). If, on the contrary, it should appear, in general, to contain *Truth*, he hopes, for the Prosperity of our sacred Religion, and the Peace of Mankind, it

* Num fingo? num mentior? cupio refelli. Quid enim laboro, nisi ut Veritas in omni quæstione illustretur.—Cic. Quæst. 3, 20.

† The opposing arbitrarily one or two (perhaps obscure) passages against the universal tenour of the Scriptures is an invidious method of preventing them from being reconciled either to themselves or to reason. In those voluminous writings, doubtless there may be *some things hard to be understood*; but their *general* meaning is, surely, the Standard that should be principally attended to; and the figurative and *ornamental* mode of expression, common to the Oriental languages, should be always remembered.

will be favoured with that serious attention which the Subject certainly requires.

The Writer is but slightly acquainted with Controversial Divinity. He has had but little time for such studies, a considerable part of his Life having been spent in the Service. Neither can he make any pretensions to deep Learning. The Candid will, however, give allowances, and readily pass over disadvantages which they know cannot weaken the plain reasonings of any man. The deductions here offered are chiefly made, as will be seen, from the truly venerable Authority of the BIBLE, and are such as the most unlettered Christian may soon be master of.

Whatever defects may be found in the endeavour, the end sincerely aimed at is, to fix, *from the sacred Volumes* (the only allowed substantial grounds of faith and

worship), our Religious regards on that *First Object* in whom all our hopes of present and future happiness must ultimately centre:—to incline, if possible, our Ecclesiastic Rulers to unite in such a *further* Amendment of our public Forms, as, in their Wisdom, they may think will reduce them to a more sensible conformity with the *Scriptures*; and prevent, by that happy means, a numerous and growing body of conscientious Christians from being driven, at length, from the Church:—a melancholy alternative!

The following just observation of a late distinguished Theologist* may not be improperly introduced here: “That the
 “ many errors and corruptions which crept
 “ into the Church, even in the very early
 “ Ages, are a standing proof and admoni-

* Dr. Middleton, Introduction to his Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers of the Church, &c., p. 113.

“ tion to all the later Ages, that there is
 “ no way of preserving a purity of *Faith*
 “ and *Worship* in any Church, but by
 “ reviewing them from time to time, and
 “ reducing them to the original test and
 “ standard of the holy *Scriptures*.”

This opinion is by no means peculiar. The excellent *Dr. Jortin*, whose unaffected modesty, natural to his great Abilities, inclined him to touch, with the tenderest hand, the defects which he saw and lamented, in the *Preface* to his learned *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, observes, “ that the Defenders of Revelation
 “ have often found themselves under a
 “ Necessity of reducing things to the ve-
 “ nerable Christianity of the New Testa-
 “ ment, and of adventuring no further ;” a method of defence which, from its singular success, at once exposes the folly and the presumption of relying on those adventitious Refinements “ which the Un-

“derstanding can hardly lay hold of,” and which have been injudiciously and unnecessarily superadded to pure Christianity, as conducive to its Dignity and Security. Some of those Refinements and Additions have, indeed, in many instances on record, “helped to fill the Church with “Nominal Catholics, and to keep up an “unity of exoteric faith in the bond of “ignorance, fear, and hypocrisy*.”

* It has been imagined (surely without due reflection) that any further *Reformation* in our mode of Worship, though ever so just in Principle, would weaken the foundations of our sacred Religion †, be productive, perhaps, of a general Scepticism, and, as inferior considerations, degrade the Authority, and invidiously injure the rights and immunities of our established *Clergy*.—But such suspicions, it is humbly conceived, have no solid grounds; for it is certain, that the nearer Their Doctrines approach to the pure precepts of the Gospel, the freer they are from unintelligible mysteries, and the burden of contra-

† *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it!* The Religion of Truth can no more be shaken than Truth itself.

dictory opinions, the more likely they will be to take root, to spread, and *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*.

As to the danger of the Clergy themselves, it will of course, on a little consideration, appear visionary. Their consequence and value (which we readily acknowledge), it is presumed, depend, and should depend, on their strict adherence to the *Scriptures*, and not on their attachment to the vain Systems and formularies of Men. And beyond all doubt, the necessity of their *Establishment* will be, at least, as Great when our received doctrines are purged from their remaining corruptions, as it is at this moment, or was at the *Reformation*. Relieved from the usual subjects of controversy, they would happily be enabled to pursue their duty with much less embarrassment; and would assuredly be placed on a firmer Basis than ever, —by becoming the guardians and promulgators of a form of Worship highly endeared to the World by its Clearness and Purity; strongly enforced by its entire consonancy to Truth and Reason; and unshaken from having its *Sole* foundation in the *Scriptures*.—"Remove from our Public Forms" (says the Learned Mr. *Hales* long since), "whatsoever has not *the Express and Undoubted warrant of Scripture*, and the *EVENT* will be, that all *Schisms* shall utterly vanish, and the Service and Honour of God in no ways suffer."

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Endeavour to preserve the *first* Great Principle of Revealed Religion, in its original simplicity, and to distinguish the *Inventions of Men* from the *Word of God*, has met with a favourable reception from many truly pious and liberal minded persons, who are well apprized of the real motives and general use of such endeavours, although they may be misunderstood, rejected, and opposed by numbers for a time. This Opposition, which was never solid in its materials, is, however, visibly decreasing in all quarters; and it is with no small satisfaction, that the friends of Truth and the Gospel perceive the gradual and permanent effects of their

labours, in vindication of the Incomplex Unity, and Unrivalled Supremacy of *the only true God*. The additions now made to this Work (the outlines only of which were originally presented) have naturally arisen from an unremitted attention to the Subject; and also from a proper regard to the objections which have appeared since its first publication. Such objections, as seemed of any weight, are answered occasionally in the course of this Edition; generally without any mention of the writers themselves,

The author conceives that the apposite selection of those sacred testimonies, throughout this Tract, which so directly confirm the important point he means to enforce, has principally given rise to the encouragement he has experienced. The Reader is therefore requested not to think it too much trouble to apply those texts to the arguments proposed, as he may see occasion:—such a task, it is rather judged,

will be pleasing, as doubtless it cannot be supposed, without offence, that any rational Being is really indifferent whether his Religious Principles are founded in Truth or not.

Our Superior Faculties were assuredly not given to remain Idle; since it is by them only that we arrive at the knowledge of a *God*, and are enabled to contemplate His glorious Productions: it is by Them only, that we discover the intrinsic Beauty, feel the awful Precepts, and comprehend the unequalled Advantages of our Divine Religion:—a fair exertion of those Faculties is therefore certainly expected; and we must be *answerable* for either the wilful misuse, or the neglect of them.

Nevertheless, it has been, and still is, the practice of Authors of no mean account, from Tertullian down to our most modern Professors, to declaim, on certain emergencies, against any appeal to the Understanding, or reliance upon it, in

matters of the deepest concern*. The Favourers of this Doctrine (which has been the Nurse of Ignorance and Idolatry), in regard to their own Modesty, should not vilify *Reason*, and insidiously attempt to court her assistance at the same time. However, such incivilities are common, and we find them recommended by the combined Examples of some of the Friends, and some of the Adversaries of Christianity.

“ The ingenious and unaccountable
 “ Author, *Bayle*, had frequent quarrels
 “ with *Reason*, which at last ran so high,
 “ that he gave her a Bill of Divorce, and

* Nobis curiositate non opus est post Jesum Christum, neo inquisitione post Evangelium: cum credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere.—Tertull. de Præscript. Hæret. § 8. Which is thus rendered in *Middleton* (Inquiry, p. 226), “ the true disciples of Christ, *have nothing more to do with curiosity or inquiry, but when they are once become believers, their sole business is to believe on.*” We may here, as on some other occasions, admire the Zeal of the Fathers, without implicitly submitting to their Opinions.

“ turned her out of doors, with, *Res tuas*
 “ *tibi habeto*. And yet, when he had dis-
 “ carded her, he would reason against
 “ her. That is,

Nec tecum possum vivere, nec sine te :

“ An absurdity which sticks, like the shirt
 “ of Hercules, to all those, of all deno-
 “ minations, who argue against *Reason*,
 “ as against a false and fallacious guide.”
Jortin's Rem. on Eccles. Hist., vol. i, p. 135,
 136, edit. 1751.

At least it would become such Persons
 to discover to us how we are to learn the
 true Sense of the Scriptures, or of any
 other writings, and to Practise the Duties
 urged in the former, without a Free use
 of that very Endowment which they so
 frequently decry*. To have an humble

* “ Religion itself, and the *Scriptures*, are addressed
 “ to us as *Reasonable* Beings; and would be of no more
 “ use to us than they are to Horses and Mules, if we were
 “ to give up *Reason*.”—*Philaletthes*: see his Attempt
 to Explain certain Passages of Scripture, Dedicated to
 the late Bishop of *Carlisle*, p. 41.

opinion of the extent of our rational powers is Wisdom; but this Wisdom is certainly not gained without a due exertion of those powers. It is not Ignorance, but sound Knowledge that is the parent of genuine Humility; of which our divine Master himself is a proper Example.

It is humbly hoped, that this piece contains, so far as the subject reaches, a just exposition and Defence of *genuine* Christianity, *on its own grounds*; although, it is very possible, some may invidiously, or too hastily, imagine it is calculated to undermine those inestimable doctrines. To such it is recommended to dismiss their prejudices and their suspicions for a moment, that the Mind may be free, and enabled to reflect calmly on what is advanced herein. They may be assured that the author has the real interest of the Christian Cause as much at heart as they can possibly have themselves. Far from being inclined to Infidelity, he (borrowing the sentiment of a much wiser man) being convinced, “ by the most strong and plain

“ historical evidence, of the certainty of
 “ those Facts which establish the truth of
 “ *Christianity*, and animated by the un-
 “ speakable value of the prospects it opens
 “ to us;—he would very thankfully be a
 “ Christian of almost any Sect whatever,
 “ rather than no Christian at all*.” It is
 agreed, however, that it is needful, for
 security, to be a true, a sincere, and a
 rational Christian.

THE passages in Scripture which *seem*
 to cloud the *divine Unity*, and to favour
 the received opinions of the *distinct* deity
 of the holy Spirit, and also the equal God-
 head of our Saviour, are, *comparatively*,
 remarkably *few*: and even of these several
 are highly *figurative*, and require much
 explication†; some are improperly trans-

* See Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, p. 52, 1787.

† Happily for the Public, and for every serious Chris-
 tian in particular, many of those abstruse texts have been
 explained by the late learned Dr. S. Clarke, Dr. Lardner,
 and since by Dr. Priestley, Mr. Lindsey, by a Writer who
 names himself *Philaletes*, by Mr. Wm. *Christie*, and
 some others, with great clearness and ability.

lated, and others are at length found to be *Interpolations**. At any rate, it surely appears to be extremely dangerous and presumptuous to allow those few obscure and indeterminate passages, to outweigh the plain and *general* testimony of the sacred Writings, which, in so many instances, proclaim the *absolute Unity* of the ALMIGHTY, in the most distinct and positive terms; making it the very basis of our Religion; and refering us directly to HIM as the Holy Object of our reverential fear, and the exhaustless source of every permanent Blessing.

How far, therefore, the adoption of

* Those learned Men who affect to doubt whether the *Interpolations* (particularly 1 John v, 7), mentioned by Unitarians (and others), have been actually made in the sacred writings, had better take the pains themselves to examine the most authentic and ancient *MSS.*, and produce *from them*, if they can, the passages in Question, before they offer any unjust insinuations to the World.

It seems to be but a poor refuge, after all, to lay hold of a few *Controverted* passages, which, if understood according to the Opinion stiled *Orthodox*, would meet with little countenance from the rest of the Bible.

Religious tenets, as fundamentals, which have no sufficient authority from the Bible, may obstruct the propagation of the Gospel:—how far it may disturb the tranquillity, and diminish the happiness of the Christian World (even beyond our present state of existence), is an inquiry worthy of the most serious attention.

Let us remember, that *God is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace**. An extravagant and rooted *fondness of Mystery*, especially in religious tenets, prevailed anciently in an extraordinary manner, and brought on endless disputations, even amongst the most eminent advocates of Christianity, as is conspicuous enough in their Writings; and to this hour it is evident that the same infatuation, in some degree, possesses us; insomuch that we are often unwilling, or afraid to trust plain sense and reason in our researches into Scripture, notwithstanding we are directed

* 1 Cor. xiv, 33.

in those very Scriptures to employ our Judgment; *to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.*—1 Thess. v, 21; see Luke xii, 57; 1 Pet. iii, 15.

Abstracted from the more difficult, or *figurative* passages (which, however, are by no means inexplicable), suffer it to be repeated, the Scripture declarations of the *Unity* of God, are full, clear, and express. Let us, therefore, abide by this pure Light, which is so graciously shed upon us, and which so benevolently unites with that inferior gift of God, *our Reason**.

* MEN may be very blameable for not admitting the *Unity*; “though it be supposed that they have only “*moral Presumption*, or *traditional* Proofs of it; because the *greater Probability* ought to determine their Judgment, and because it is unquestionable Matter of “Duty, in *dubious* Cases, to take the *safer* Side.” If this be sound reasoning (applied by the Author, more particularly to the *Heathen* of old), the *Safer Side* for *Us* to take, seems to be this:—to compare the *Scripture* declarations *for* and *against* the proper *Unity of God*, and yield to the *Strongest* and *Clearest* Evidence. On which side this is likely to fall, it is hoped, will appear, with accumulated force, in the following sheets. The passage

Indeed, an *Intelligible* Religion, suited to *our* Understanding, is the Only Religion that can be really Beneficial to us ; and therefore, if God himself, intending to communicate any essential Knowledge to men, were to speak to them, at any time, He must certainly speak in the language of men, and according to the powers of Conceiving and Judging, which He hath been pleased to bestow upon them ; otherwise He could neither be understood nor obeyed. The same Rule holds good with respect to any Delegate that God might appoint. This is self-evident. As to the greater part of the *Mysteries*, which have so long distressed our faculties, we must look to some other Cause for them.

It must be obvious to those who have given any attention to the *Epistles* of the *New Testament*, and to Ecclesiastical His-

just quoted is, however, from a Writer (*supposed* Dr. Waterland) who was a strenuous Advocate for the *Athanasian Doctrine*.—See *Dissertation* added to *Bishop Law's Inquiry into the Ideas of Space, Time, &c.* p. 76.

tory, that, even in the first century, the Christian doctrines *began* to be Corrupted by the *Gnostics*; and, soon after, by other learned Philosophizing Converts, who had newly embraced Christianity, and who, under a notion of *Refinement*, endeavoured to infuse into the Christian System, some of the subtilized Tenets of the Orientalists and *Platonists*, of which, many of those Converts, it seems, were full, and valued highly. How much soever, therefore, our curiosity may be gratified by the perusal of ancient writings, it appears, after all, that we have no Solid foundation to rest upon, but in the plain Doctrines of Christ and his Apostles.

Yet, it is confessed, that the refined Passion for *spiritual arcana*, so cherished of old*, is far from being extinct. To

* "The very pious and learned Dr. *Grabe*, has observed, that, in the second Century, about the time of *Justin Martyr*, it became a *prevailing custom to import into the sacred text senses, which did not belong to it.*"—See Middleton on Miraculous Powers, p. 28.

favour its Influence, the sacred Doctrines are still often incumbered with hidden meanings, and darkened by unnatural Interpretations ; and that easy captivating manner in which they were, at first, delivered, and conveyed directly to the heart, is not, in general, thought worthy of being imitated. *Simplicity*, the handmaid of *Truth*, appears to have long lost her charms in the eye of the learned Christian : She is, therefore, very willingly, neglected or discarded : his exalted Ideas might sometimes make him blush at the suggestions of so unreserved and lowly a Companion.

Instead of a Gospel of Peace, a *Revelation* kindly suited to our common faculties, some will admit of no Dispensations from Heaven, but such as strike the Soul with Astonishment, and fill all her powers with doubt, dismay, and confusion :—As if the mild and Instructive communications of Divine light, would be wholly insufficient, or totally lost, even in the bosoms

of the most virtuous, pious, and humble. Unhappy offspring of purest Benevolence! in vain then do ye thirst for the clear and living streams; in vain hunger after righteousness: *The bread which came down from heaven* is not calculated, it seems, for your digestion. If the main *Doctrine* contains so little Sublimity as to be Comprehensible to *man* (for whose Comfort and Improvement, alone, it was Intended), it cannot then descend *from above*, but is earthly, sensual, devilish!

These wayward, marvellous Opinions, with many others, we enjoy from a certain Source, from which *Protestants* suppose themselves severed long since, and rejoice, as being freed from an Eclipsed luminary. But the disjunction is not so complete as many imagine. We are still told it is contaminating and heretical to agree, that any People not Christian, and not Learned, have ever been able to discover or adopt any one religious Truth whatsoever. A

well-informed person, some time past, gently intimated, that “a little more candour, and a little less partiality, “would do us no harm*.”

The Reader doubtless may have heard, or read, that the *Unitarians* of the last and present century, have been, by the Zeal of some of their Adversaries, compared to, or associated with Mahometans. This antiquated *contrivance*, unfortunately betrays too much of an invidious intolerant spirit, and so little judgment†, that the

* Dr. Jortin.

† What have the false pretensions and delusions of Mahomet to do with his maintaining the *Divine Unity*? —an article which he had discernment enough to borrow from the *Scriptures*.

The *present* Unitarian Doctrine is coeval with Christianity, and is not only incompatible with *Arianism*, but also differs, in several respects, from the *Socinian* tenets: It is drawn from the *plain* and *general* evidence of the *Bible*, without any dependence on Metaphysical disquisitions, or confinement to the Opinions of any (uninspired) men *whatsoever*. It is a mistake in those who imagine

effect intended is utterly destroyed. Instead of conveying a Reproach, the Comparison, *so far as it regards the Divine Unity* (and it can apply no further), confers a permanent Honour. This consequence Calumny itself dares not deny. It is a standing Rule with Unitarians (it is hoped with all of them) to coalesce with Verity *wherever* they perceive it, or think they perceive it. And where would lie the harm if this Principle were more widely diffused? The Nature of Truth is not altered by the Subject in whom it is manifest. The genuine lustre of the Diamond is not diminished, nor its value lessened by the impurity of the Soil wherein we may find it. Nor is there any fear that a Truth discovered in a Mahometan, will destroy, or contradict any Truth found in a Christian. An Author whom we have

that the *Unitarian* Principles are *modern*. Established custom will, indeed, make them appear so to many. But, "Error," says a Greek writer, "is *old*, therefore, Truth seemeth *new*."

already quoted, has illustrated this axiom in elegant language. " I look upon the
 " discovery of any thing which is true, as
 " a valuable acquisition to society ; which
 " cannot possibly hurt, or obstruct the
 " good effect of any other Truth what-
 " soever : *for they all partake of one com-
 " mon essence, and necessarily coincide
 " with each other ; and like the drops of
 " rain, which fall separately into the river,
 " mix themselves at once with the stream,
 " and strengthen the general current *."*

THE Opponents of the Unitarians are now driven to charge them with disbelieving the received Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as advanced in the *Athanasian* and *Nicene* Creeds, the Articles, &c. *because* it is *above* their Comprehension. Whereas (not to insist on the Contradictions which appear to be inseparable from that Doctrine), their disbelief principally arises from a

* Dr. Middleton's Preface to his Free Inquiry, &c. p. vii.

very different ground ; — from their not being able to discover any *such* Doctrine really inculcated *in the Bible* ; but, indeed, the very contrary ; namely, that *God is One, One Divine Person*, and *He* solely to be Adored as God. And they moreover perceive, that the severest Judgments are denounced in Scripture against any departure from these sacred Truths.

The unitarians pretend to no superior abilities ; but they hope that their faculties are not inferior to those of other Men : They humbly trust, also, that they have the most powerful Advocates in their favour, namely, *the general tenour of the sacred Writings, the Practice of the earliest Christians**, and *Common Sense* ; and to

* The Apostles, indeed, and other *Primitive* Christians, seem not to have been so intimately instructed in the *Nature* of Christ, as were (if we may judge from their Explications) their successors, the Christian Fathers, &c. For, the former scrupled not to speak of him (without any caution concerning his *Divinity*) as a *PROPHET mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people* :

these the great Cause they maintain is very willingly submitted.

Very many, and particularly the unlearned, would be greatly aided in their determination, if a New Translation, or at least a just and accurate Revisal of the Bible were accomplished. For, though

as a man approved of God, by miracles, &c. which God did by him. As this language can never be strained into unison with certain rooted Opinions, some may be apt to wish that the Apostles had appeared more strictly *Orthodox* (as it is called) or the Fathers less so.

“The Christian religion, in the most early times, was proposed to the Jews and Heathens without the article of Christ’s Divinity” (says, with others, Dean Swift, Works, vol. xvi, p. 44). But, the *Successors* of the Apostles and earliest Christians were pleased by degrees to propose and teach the Christian Religion *with* the article of Christ’s *Divinity*; at last maintaining his Divinity to be such as renders him fully *Equal* in all respects to his God and Father. What proper Authority *they* had (and it certainly *required* the very highest), to advance so prodigious a step beyond the doctrine of the *Apostles*, doth not appear. The consequences of such presumption, however, have been perceived and felt both within and without the bounds of Christianity for many ages.

our common Version hath been a general blessing, yet, without meaning any reflection on the Translators, it certainly might be much improved. To make so extensive a Collation of ancient Manuscripts (and ancient Versions), as might *now* be made, was not in the power of our Translators; and it will not be said that the Scriptures, or the languages in which they were originally written, are less understood at this day, than in their time. Several very worthy and enlightened men have pointed out the scattered defects and improprieties in our English Version: and it appears from the numerous and valuable specimens lately given to the public, that the various readings, some of greater, some of less importance, found in the different MSS. (owing to the mistakes or carelessness of Transcribers) might be properly corrected in a new Translation (or Revisal), and some of them better reconciled with the context; and also the genuine sense restored to many disordered

passages*. These are objects of great concern. The best, however, that can be done at present, by the generality, is, to compare one part of Scripture with another written on the same or on a similar subject, and expound the obscure passages by those which are more clear; ever having it in mind, that the original Writers meant to be comprehensible and uniform, and not to perplex.

We wish to apprise the Reader, that, although the subtilties found in the writings of some Trinitarians, have obliged us to enter occasionally into reasonings somewhat Metaphysical, in order to shew the insufficiency of their Arguments; yet, the Essential part of the controversy is very far from being confined to Theory; it re-

* The Reader must be referred to the writings of Bishop Lowth, Kennicott, Geddes, &c.—See also *Commentaries and Essays*, vol. i, published by the Society for promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures, sold by J. Johnson, St. Paul's Churchyard.

lates directly to *Practice*, and finally centers in the rightful *Object* of Religious Worship. The unitarians contend, that (whatever *subordinate* honours become due to *Christ*) there is but *One* most *Holy Person* who is truly and properly God ; and, consequently, but *one* proper *Object* of *Divine Worship*, namely, *The Father, the Lord of heaven and earth*, as our Saviour called *Him* (Luke x, 21) ; and it remains with the Trinitarians to prove the contrary, if they can, from Scripture or from Reason. Thus the great All-interesting Point may be put upon a clear and short issue ; and it certainly demands their most serious attention,

If this treatise should happily lead to the further discovery of *Truth* ; if it should, in any measure, be productive of *that Peace which passeth all understanding*, and which infinitely supersedes all earthly enjoyments whatsoever ; — the praise be to God, from whose kind *Dispensations* every

true light ariseth.—May the advantages be reaped, in the fullest sense, by every pious Christian, as well as by the humble Instrument, who, deeply sensible of the awful Subject he is engaged in, has endeavoured, in strict conformity to the Precepts of Revelation, to assert the exclusive right of our omnipotent and benevolent CREATOR, to every possible testimony of our *Highest* Gratitude, Love, Obedience, and Praise.



AN
ELUCIDATION
OF THE
UNITY OF GOD,
DEDUCED FROM
SCRIPTURE AND REASON.
ADDRESSED TO
CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

The Lord Reigneth; let the Earth rejoice: let the multitude of Isles be glad thereof.—Psalm xcvi, 1.

*Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the Earth: for I am God; and there is none else.
—Isaiah xlv, 22.*

IT has been long a most affecting consideration, with all those who are seriously and Religiously disposed, that Mankind, and even the several sects of Christians, should still be so greatly divided in those Principles which regard the *Proper Object* of Adoration, and the most acceptable and orthodox mode of discharging

the sacred Duty of Divine Worship. The Mind of Man is distracted by the various Opinions that have prevailed, and do yet prevail ; and intimidated by the positive manner in which some of them have been insisted on, according to the several Ideas, and imaginary Interests of different Writers. This disunion, in the very groundwork of our faith, has done unspeakable injury to our holy Religion.

A standing cause of *those* Divisions which may appear to be grounded on *Essentials*, and therefore deserve attention, seems to be this ; that many of the present Doctrines of the several *Christian Churches*, are derived, like the Traditionary tenets of the Scribes and Pharisees, not from the steady Light of Revelation, but from the irregular and fanciful glimmerings of Antiquity ; not from Reason, but from Precedent.

The long controverted Creed ascribed to Athanasius, which asserts a *Trinity* in Unity, has been, in a great measure, we apprehend, the occasion (however unintended) of pernicious dissensions amongst Christians ; and, indeed, any attempt to destroy the *strict* Unity of the Deity, must ever involve us in confusion, and shake the peace of Mankind.

It is designed, therefore, in the following pages, to manifest the truth and consistency of the Bible on an Article of infinite concern; —to recover the Harmony, on a Principle of heavenly origin, which has been disturbed here below, chiefly by an unhappy experiment, in an early period, to accomodate the simplicity of the sacred Doctrines to the abstruse Speculations of an ancient Philosophy. We shall endeavour to pursue the most easy and direct methods, as the most conducive to the end proposed. The fairest prospect of increasing that Faith which overcometh the World, is, in our efforts to remove, and not to establish, the Difficulties which appear to have been obtruded upon the Gospel : And it is a great happiness that our Creator has not left men under the necessity of employing any very deep or subtile arguments in support of a subject, on which to be in darkness is to be completely miserable. The virtuous mind, fearful of error, and anxious to be firmly grounded in Truths the most valuable, is too often precluded from every hope of satisfaction, by a dejecting and final appeal to *Mystery* ; a Resource which has been the gloomy and uniform support of the revolting doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, and which (as it is still managed) seems to be calculated for

those only, who are willing to lay Reason and Religion asleep together*.

The *Rational Powers* were certainly given to Man, not to mislead him, but to direct his Judgment, and regulate his Ideas in the most interesting researches. Without the use of those Powers, it would be impossible to distinguish true from false Religion; and, indeed, it is very difficult to conceive how any Religion can take firm hold of a sound Mind, without an union with its *Reason*. It is in vain, therefore, to depreciate this Heavenly gift. When we are taught that we are bound “to believe faith-

* For the true meaning of the Word, *Mystery*, in the *New Testament*; See Mr. *Christie's Discourses* on the *Divine Unity*; 2d. ed. p. 57, 258, 259. The *Mysteries*, which Men have so much insisted on, appear chiefly to be of human Invention.—See Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Col. i. 26, 27. God was pleased to give us a *Revelation*, not a *Mystery*: The Terms are as directly opposed as those of *Light* and *Darkness*. The *Mysteries* mentioned in *Scripture*, do not relate to the *Nature of God*, but generally to the nature and time of his *Dispensations*: And as to These, what appeared *once* (i. e. *before* the coming of Christ) *Mysterious*, or Difficult to be understood (as the calling of the *Gentiles* to equal Privileges with the *Jews*, Eph. iii. 2—6), the *Apostle* tells us, is *now* Revealed, or *made Manifest*; viz. by the *Gospel*.—See Bishop *Chandler's Defence of Christianity*, p. 280—282.

*fully**,” Positions which we cannot possibly accede to, on reflection, without direct violence to our inmost perceptions, and becoming deaf to the voice of Nature all around us†; we may indeed give an *outward* assent, in deference to the Opinions of others, but we cannot be satisfied *within*. To contend, that “still we are “obliged, on many occasions, to admit what “we cannot either discover or comprehend” (though indeed true in various instances‡), is rather a Sophistic argument *on the point before us*, than a just and satisfactory deduction: For here, the Assertors of the *Athanasian* scheme, would confound the necessary distinction be-

* “To say a man is *bound to Believe*, is neither truth nor “sense.”—*Dean Swift’s* Thoughts on Religion, Works, vol. xvi, p. 43.

† “A *continued relation* runs through the entire system of “material beings (or rather through the whole creation) “which joins the *least* with the *greatest*, and shews the whole “work to be *one*, and the effect of the *same* power and know-
“ledge.” Matho, vol. i, p. 194.

“I think the common Arguments, *a posteriori*, for the “Unity of the Divine Nature, drawn from the *Order* and *Har-* “mony of the World, very good and sufficient. They “make the Point morally certain, and render the other side “of the Question highly improbable and *unreasonable*.”—In-
quiry into the Ideas of Space, Time, Immensity, &c. by E. Law, M. A. (late Bishop of Carlisle) p. 177.

‡ i. e. In such instances as involve no *contradiction*.

tween what is above the reach of our Understanding, and what is repugnant to it—They would infer, that because we have not faculties to disclose the *mode* of God's Existence, or his miraculous manner of *working* ; He expects us to *believe* in a (pretended) Mystery, palpably incongruous ;—a *Mystery which confounds his Unity, divides his Worship, and gives Him EQUALS in Infinite Power and Dominion !*

A long lapse of time (in which Example hath had its full effect) has reconciled men to doctrines which they have embraced, not, in general, from their own Investigations, but, as before intimated, from an implicit reliance on the Opinions of others, and a shameful neglect of examining for themselves, whether those Opinions are well founded or not. Human Authority, Prejudice, and Custom, have not only prevailed against the express Injunctions of the Bible, but, in some instances, have been suffered absolutely to overpower the clearest Testimony of the Senses. If, therefore, we experience any difficulties in the *First Principle* of our Religion, they may be fairly attributed to the surrender of our own Reason, and a deviation from that Path which was originally prescribed, in the gracious Dispensations of our Creator.

For, *With respect to the Existence of ONE SUPREME ALL-GOVERNING BEING; and the humble Acknowledgment of His wonderful and inscrutable Works*:—That in *Him* is centered the *exclusive* right of Adoration from all his Creatures throughout the Universe:—Supreme in Glory; in Majesty, Nature, and Dominion, *unrivalled, unequalled!*—That to *Him alone* our gratitude, love, reverence, and faithful Obedience, *in the highest degree*, are due for ever:—*These* Principles, simple, clear, and solid, give rise to no perplexing difficulties, in us poor beings: The *First*, thanks be to God, is placed far above the mist of Doubt, if we would suffer ourselves to be guided by the light of Nature or of *Revelation!* and as to his glorious Operations, all Men with great facility believe (*though his ways are past finding out*) that every thing whatsoever, in the fullest sense, is possible with *Him, that doth not imply a Contradiction.* And herein the Mind, unclouded with Prejudice, rests satisfied;—in all humility, and with great peace and willingness acquiescing in the Faith of the Infinite Power and Wisdom of God, which even the evidence of our own Senses daily confirms to us. But Reason starts at the assertion, that there are also *other* Beings possessing the same adorable and *boundless* Attributes; this immediately throws the mind into in-

extricable difficulty, and forces us into manifest contradictions.

So far as men have been enabled to explore the visible Operations of *God*, they have discovered in them a perfect *Unity of design*, and a most intimate *Relation* preserved through all their Parts; manifesting that the Wisdom which Planned, and the Power that Executed the Whole, were the inseparable Attributes of *One* and *the same* Almighty Being: And that, although the splendid Works above us (which, like our Earth, we have the strongest reason to believe, are filled with countless Wonders), are vast in Magnitude, and almost Infinite in Number; yet, with all their Beauty and their Glory, they are formed and conducted with the most admirable *Simplicity*; at the same time completely Answering every possible intention of unbounded Wisdom and Goodness. A Religion derived from the *very same* Source, we might well think, would, in its most striking features, partake of the same engaging Qualities. We might, by analogy, expect it to be *Simple* in its construction, though great and good in its effects, and *End* proposed: Its *Fundamental Principles* easily to be comprehended by the mass of Mankind, or it could hardly answer its *general* purpose. And such, indeed,

is the *Christian Religion*, in its native state : The load of foreign complex Articles, which have been attached to it at different periods, serve only to encumber it, to veil its Beauties, and deaden its proper Effects.

The pure and artless Doctrines of primitive Christianity, which are comprised in *the love of God and Man*, have been *wrested* into different and obscure meanings; and the worship of *One* God alone, *One Universal Parent*, so strongly inculcated in both the Old and New Testament, has, through the long prejudices of succeeding Ages, the confused notions, and mistaken zeal of Men, given way to the Glorifying and Adoring of *Three* distinct Divinities, or *Persons* in the Godhead, *Co-équal** ! in contradiction to the general tenour of the sacred Scriptures, and the natural discernment of all Mankind †. In short, while we acknowledge a *Trinity* of divine Persons, *co-equal* and *co-eter-*

* It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the *Litany*, the Creed of St. *Athanasius* afore mentioned, the Doxologies, &c.

† It is remarkable that, the most ancient Heathens, the most unenlightened Savages, have, in general, been led naturally to conclude, that *One* of their Deities must be *Superior* to all the others.

*nal**, are the consequences at all wonderful when we go on to Worship them *all Three*, in fact, and not *One* only?

From the most authentic Ecclesiastical History†, it appears, that the Idea of a *Trinity* (in which, however, the *Son*, and *holy Spirit*, were thought to be greatly *Inferior* to the *Father*), began to be diffused among Christians,

* If the Son was *begotten* of (or *produced* by) the Father, it seems clear, that the Father must have Existed *before* the Son; how then can they be properly *Co-eternal*?—See John vi, 57; Col. i, 15.

† The genuineness of those Works supposed to have been written by the *apostolical Fathers* (the cotemporaries, or *immediate* successors of the Apostles), unfortunately cannot, in general, be depended on. Learned men (not all Unitarians) have condemned some of these writings as entirely *Spurious*; and discovered, in the remaining copies of others, evident marks of *Interpolation*, and frequently in those very passages which (as they now stand) appear the most favourable to a Polytheistic Hypothesis. Archbishop *Usher* pointed out some of these forgeries (found in the Epistles of *Ignasius*), by printing them in red letters.—See Lindsey's *Sequel*, p. 446. There seems to be a Providence in the general faith, which has always prevailed in the world, that the Old and New Testament (or the principal parts of them) were written by *Divine Inspiration*;—this Belief saved these sacred Books, in a great measure, from the daring Corruptions to which other ancient writings have been exposed.

by the more learned and philosophizing part of them, about the time of Justin Martyr; but that this doctrine, of a *Co-equal* Trinity, was not settled, or completed, before the fourth Century*; that is, it was introduced into the Church *by degrees*, and after much variation and contest. Strong evidence, if there were no other, that it cannot be a *primitive doctrine*. The Creeds and forms of Prayer, generally used by Christians, prior to the fourth Century (several of which are still preserved to us), give a further proof of the subsequent Innovations.

The efforts which have been made to qualify this visible defection from Revelation, are far from affording relief; for as to the Term *Persons*, however it may be subtilized to avoid gross Ideas, it must ultimately signify *Beings*, *intelligent Beings*; which leaves the difficulty

* The council of Constantinople, held in the year 381, may be said to have established the doctrine of the *perfect Equality* of the *Three Persons* in the Trinity. The celebrated *M. Jurieu* has remarked, “ that the fundamental articles of Christianity were not understood by the Fathers “ of the *Three first Centuries*; that the true System began “ to be modelled into some shape by the Nicene Bishops, “ and was afterwards improved by the following synods “ and councils.” — Jortin’s Remarks, vol. iii, p. 50.

and the danger much the same. "There are," say some, "in the Godhead, Three *distinct* infinite Minds or Spirits, three *individual* Substances, *separate Objects* of adoration, but yet " (incomprehensibly) united in *One*." What is this, at last, but teaching us to divide in Idea the Deity into *Parts*? In consequence of which, the Religious Mind is exceedingly distressed; our most exalted Affections and Services frequently *shifted* or *diverted* from their *Great Object*, *The Father of Mercies*, and the *God of all Comfort**, and the first and most sacred *Commandments* of the *Bible*, in effect, *unhallowed*, *unobeyed*†.

If an awful Reverence for the glorious Attributes of God, be a Disposition most just, and highly commendable (as certainly it is); This Reverence is very Unlikely to be Permanent or *Fixed*, on the degrading Supposition, that those Illustrious Perfections are *not* Peculiar to His *own Person*.

* 2 Cor. i, 3.

† Exod. xx, 3; Deut. vi, 5, 6; Luke iv, 8; Matt. xxii, 37, 38. "Supreme affection cannot belong to two or more persons. We can but love *One* with *all* our heart," &c. —Mr. Lindsey's Apology, p. 92.

We behold in the instance of the Roman Catholics (from whom we received the *Trinitarian Doctrine* in its most approved Form), that whenever Men relinquish the simple and rational Principle of Worshipping only *One* God and *Father of All*, they hardly know where to stop, or on Whom to rely. *They*, whose Piety we can have no right to question, have proceeded to adoration and prayer, not only to the Trinity, but also to the Virgin Mary, all the Apostles, and to every Saint in their endless Catalogue; and are taught to believe that their Salvation depends upon these Observances.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, give Light to the minds of these our fellow Christians, that they may discern the Precipice before them, to the edge of which they have been led by the magic power of Superstition, and the shameful forgeries and mistakes of anterior ages.

Instead of charging Mankind, as usual, with an obstinate disposition of *unbelief* in Religious tenets; it would, from the above and many other examples, be more just to allow, that the *greater number* are apt too easily to yield up their own better judgment, to act often in opposition to its suggestions, and to become by de-

grees, not only passionately fond of Mystery and Superstition, but, sometimes, even the grossest absurdities and impieties have been imbibed (or at least conformed to) with surprising facility, and *especially* in religious articles; of which the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* affords us a further and more striking proof.

But *Truth* is eternal and unchangeable; and our Blessed Guide taught us no other than Truth, however our own prejudices may have misled us, and perverted *his* doctrines. It is with the deepest concern that many pious lovers of the Gospel behold those precious Doctrines depraved, and the salutary fruits which might be expected from them, blighted for so long a period, by the superinduction of the *Trinitarian System*; which, from its perplexity, and the inconsistencies which *unavoidably* arise from it, has been productive of an inveterate *Scepticism*, for many ages, amongst the more Intelligent part of the Christian World.

This pernicious Diffidence is not found to decrease. How should it? since the Volumes which have been professedly written (often with the best intentions) to defend, or explain the *Athanasian* hypothesis, have, to this day,

strengthened the very Doubts they were meant to overcome; and by *forcing* the sacred writings to countenance such distracting Positions, they have converted *the Light* into Darkness, and unhappily sometimes brought in question that authority and truth which would otherwise have continued clear and invincible. It is remarkable, and in the end will prove highly advantageous to genuine Christianity, that Those who have been used to distinguish accurately, can scarcely ever read the defensive Books abovementioned, without discovering in them nearly as many manifest contradictions as there are pages; a strong symptom of the Unsoundness of the Doctrines they contain. There is *a great gulf fixed*, by God himself (though *we* cannot always discern it), between the boundaries of Truth and Error; and the most ingenious struggles to remove the Barrier will be ever found vain and ineffectual*.

IF then it can be distinctly proved both from Scripture and the rational deductions of Men, that the Worship of a *Trinity* of divine Persons

* A veteran Writer has lately reminded us that the doctrine of the *Trinity* in Unity is as clear as the proposition that, "*Three equilateral lines made One triangle*," and in consonance with this *demonstration*, we have seen the God-head represented, in the first leaf of a very excellent reli-

is contradictory, and the worship of only *One* God, consonant both to Scripture and Reason, it may be greatly hoped, that an Union of Faith in this most important point, will follow amongst rational Christians, however we may choose to differ in the *manner* of performing our Religious Duties.

It may be premised, that as the Christian Religion was certainly not intended for the learned and penetrating only, but, happily, for all ranks and conditions of men ; it, therefore, doth not appear at all probable, that a Doctrine, of such magnitude and consequence as that of the Trinity is made to be, should be involved in deep obscurity by Those who were sent to give us Light ; scattered (as some think they perceive) by piecemeal, as it were, in their Records ; and left to be discovered, explained, and reconciled by the weak and discordant faculties of men ; while the Doctrine of *one* God, even *the Father*, is enforced throughout, by a testimony equally *clear* and *uniform*. If the Sal-

gious publication, *by a Triangle*, surrounded with a Glory, &c. This piece of unworthy Artifice (though it borders a little on blasphemy) has flourished long ; and the same miserable sophistry might be used to persuade us that there are *eight Gods in One*. Why ? Because *eight* angles conjoined make only *One* octangle !

vation of Christians depended on the belief of a *Trinity*, may we not think that so very Interesting an Article, calculated to influence and direct our *Practice*, would have been as distinctly revealed to us; elucidated by Those who were most capable; and a *discriminating Worship* formed accordingly, and invariably insisted on by Them: and also plain and repeated Rules and Examples given of *such Worship* (like those appropriated to *the Father*), that there might be no easy occasion left for doubt, error, or neglect in any, even in the meanest, who should become sincerely desirous of knowing the Truth, on so fundamental a point, and Obeying it? But, as the *received Doctrine* stands, “it must needs be a very learned, and “a very subtile, and a very ingenious thing to “be a good Christian*.”

Our Saviour marks it as one of the peculiar blessings of the Gospel, that it was *preached to the Poor*† (Matt. xi, 5); who would, however,

* The words between commas are Dr. Jortin’s.—*Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* Pref. p. xli.

† This happy event was foretold by Isaiah in a beautiful figure, c. xxxv, 1, &c. *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose!* God, by Christ his chief and benevo-

have been but little benefited by it, if its principal (*saving*) Doctrines had really been (not such as *wayfaring men, though simple, should not err therein*, but) such as the most skilful in Science or Literature have never been able to understand.

We shall now present some of the plainest deductions of Reason to elucidate the *positive Unity* of the Almighty, and to shew that no other Being can be *Equal* with Him; by which we have no other intention than to vindicate the solemn *Declarations* which follow from the Bible.

lent Ambassador, did gladden the heart of the poor destitute, and heal in the *Wilderness* in a literal sense. But the Prophet had a further and more Important meaning; *namely*, that the spirit of useful Knowledge and Truth, through the preaching of the Gospel, should be poured upon the uncultivated Minds of the poor and the simple: ver. 8.

AFFIRMATIVE PROPOSITION.

Two, or more, *All-Perfect* Beings (or *Persons*), are not only *unnecessary*, but also *inconsistent*.

PROOF.

Unnecessary. Because, admitting an *Independent* Being, *existing and acting eternally*, of *unlimited* Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Knowledge and Justice*; there can be no possible *necessity* for any other of *equal* Perfection.

Inconsistent. For, *supposing* there were two, or more, such *Infinitely Perfect* Beings in the Universe; it would follow that, *All but ONE of them, must necessarily desist from the EXERCISE of their Powers* UNIVERSALLY: which *unavoidable* suspension, directly contradicts the possi-

* The Reader may, if he pleases, see this Point (respecting the *Unlimitedness* of the divine Attributes) demonstrated, in Bishop Law's *Notes to Archbp. King's Origin of Evil*, 2d edit. from p. 46 to 52. In Duncan's *Baxter* (a most excellent publication), sec. i, p. 4; and, indeed, in many other Authors.

bility of their being all *equally* perfect, because *All* could not be *eternally Independent* and *Unlimited**.

With respect to any Being who is under *Direction*; who may be occasionally *restrained* from the free use of his Powers, or who can exercise them *only partially*, or in a *limited*

* If the Deity *himself* Presides *universally* and *eternally*, with *absolute* Dominion and Independence, it is clear that, no other Being *whatsoever* can share in any Operations, but by a Power *Derived* from and *Dependent* on Him.

But as it is asserted that there are *THREE Divine Persons*, *EQUAL* in Perfection and Dominion; Who, though *Different* in Themselves (i. e. in their *Persons*), Act only by *One*, and the *very Same Power, Will, Authority, &c.*: It may, therefore, be proper to endeavour to shew distinctly, the Inconsistency of this Unscriptural Hypothesis; which is intended to destroy the Idea of any real *Subordinancy* in these Three Persons.

Each of these *Divine Persons* must *Necessarily* possess his own proper Individual Powers of *Thinking, Willing, Acting, &c.*; otherwise (Notwithstanding any Unity of *Substance*), there could be no real *distinction of PERSONS*; this very necessity, therefore, implies that there cannot be any *absolute Union* or *Blending* of Their Power, Perception, and other *Properties* or *Attributes*, without Confounding Their *Intellects*, and Destroying Their *Individuality*. They may,

Circle;—it is not the *One* we are seeking. The Attributes of the LORD of the Universe, whom we are contemplating, are solely un-

indeed, be Supposed to *Agree* and Cooperate, as *Three* United or *Associated* Gods; but this is manifest *Tritheism*. With respect to Their *Equality*; How is it Imaginable that Power *Absolutely Infinite* can be the Property of more than *One* Supreme Intelligent Agent; since *This* Power is (*as Such*) in its very Nature, *Exclusive*, *indivisible*, and *Incommunicable*?

In short; The *First Cause*, The *Undersived*, *Independent Father*, is either *Absolutely perfect*, or He is *not*: To suppose He is *not*, would be both Impious and Absurd. But, if we conclude (as we shall find ourselves obliged to do), that He possesses *Absolute Perfection* in His *own Person*; then no other Being or *Person* whatsoever, can be supposed to possess *the like*, without a contradiction: as has been just now shewn, from the consideration, that *Infinite* or *Unlimited Power* (which is included in *absolute Perfection*), can belong to but *One* Divine Person, or *Intelligent Agent*. It is not Conceivable, that there can be *more* than *One* Divine Person, Who is *Universally* and *Eternally Absolute*; or that there can be more than *One* (Eternally) *All-Directing*, *All-Pervading* Power. Therefore, notwithstanding the most subtile arguments, we are reduced to this Dilemma at last: we must either deny that *the Father* possesses this *absolute Perfection in Se*; or we must confine it to *Him alone*;—and acknowledge that *His consummate* and *unequalled* Attributes render *Him all-sufficient* and *Supreme*.

derived, and, in consequence *perfectly free*, and his *Unbounded Power* (universally and constantly exerted*) leaves no possibility for any other to subsist *in the same degree*.

Absolute Perfection is, therefore, consistent with *One Intelligent Being only*;—with the *Most High*; eternally and unchangeably existing *in his Person alone*.

For, as above, it is a manifest contradiction to suppose *two* or more Beings (or *Persons*) *positively Unlimited*, in Power, Authority, Dominion, &c.—See 1 Chron. xxix, 10, 11, 12.

The *Unity* of the First Cause being established, to say, that this Adorable Being has bestowed, or communicated, an *equal* degree (that is an infinite degree) of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, &c. to any other Being; is to declare that the Creature can be made equal to the Creator, or the *Effect* equal to the *Cause*.

It is Grossly Inconsistent to suppose that the

* Psalm. lxvi, 7; ciii, 19; cxlv throughout.

Eternal Father can be the CAUSE of any being, or Person, *Equal* with *Himself**.

The last is as simple and as clear a Proposition as can be offered to the Mind, and needs no comment.

Contented with irrefragable evidence that the Almighty Author of all Things is truly *One*, the intelligent, but humble Christian, pretends not to describe the *manner* of His existence; it was Athanasius, or rather *his Followers*†, who, from a mistaken zeal (influenced by a false Philosophy), presumed to divide and subdivide the Deity, and shew the mode of His Existence; torturing the faculties of Mankind by making *One* a *Plurality*, or constituting a *Threefold* God of *One* God: and then they un-

* Any *Caused* Being must evidently at least want the Great *Primary* Property, or Attribute, of *Self-Existence*, or *Proper Eternity*.

† In justice to *Athanasius* it should be *generally* understood, that there are strong reasons to believe, that the *Creed* imputed to him, was not written until, at least, 60 years after his time; but by *Whom* is not certainly known.—See *Rem.* on *Eccle. His.* vol. iv, p. 313. Dr. *Jortin* does not seem to have felt any very high degree of respect for this *Creed*;—"It matters little," he says, "by whom, or where, or when it was composed."

mercifully fulminated everlasting perdition on all those who did not, or cannot now, believe *their* Hypothesis.

It will not be said that Objections have been made to this Hypothesis, for want of sufficient *Time* to reflect upon it; or for want of serious attention to it; or a due exertion of the rational Faculties upon it; since experience shews us, that the longer and the closer it is investigated, the more insuperable its Difficulties appear. Among many others the following may be added to those preceding:—

When we consider the *Son* and the *Holy Ghost* as *Persons*, or Intelligent Agents*, *Distinct* or *Different* from the *Father*; we find ourselves forced to conceive that their *Powers* must be either *Inherent* or *Derived*.

Now if their *Powers* or Attributes be *Unoriginated*, *absolutely Inherent*, like those of the *Father*, and their *Persons distinct*, then it evidently follows that we have *Three Distinct Independent*

* “*Intelligent Agent*, is the proper and adequate Definition of the Word, *Person*; nor can it otherwise be understood with any distinct Sense or Meaning at all.”—Dr. Clarke, Works. Fol. edit. vol. iv, p. 122.

Gods. But, if their *Powers* are *Derived*, so must be likewise Their *Existence*; and then they (the Son and Holy Spirit) are, in consequence, *Effects*, be They ever so Exalted. This conclusion appears to admit of no *Qualification* whatsoever, as has been attempted: Because the least *Derivation* of their Powers, or (if the expression may be allowed) of any *part* of them, destroys at once the possibility of their *Equality* with a *Self-Perfect, Self-Existent Being*: Whose Attributes we believe are *All* as *absolutely Free* and *Underived* as His *Person*.

These Peculiar and Transcendent Properties are; therefore, of themselves, one should conceive, sufficient to ground our determination: For, the *Existence, Power, &c.* of the FATHER, being *solely* and positively *Underived* (which, indeed, the Athanasians themselves allow), *must* render *Him* SUPREME, without any other consideration.

This will appear still more forcibly, if we remember, that these *Underived* Properties are certainly, *as such*, for ever *Incommunicable*. Qualities or Attributes *Communicated* or *Imparted*, in any mode or degree, are then (as to the Receiver) *Derived*; as the words imply.

But with the Apostle we may ask, *Who hath first given to HIM?* &c.—Rom. xi, 35, 36.

The Notion of considering the *Persons*, or *Subsistences* of the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* as originally *flowing* from the *Substance* of the *Father*, in like manner with his *Wisdom*, *Power*, &c. is not Correspondent, or Correlative: For the *Wisdom*, *Power*, &c. of God, are absolutely His *own Properties*, and, in fact, indistinguishable from *Himself*. But the advocates for the received Hypothesis, will hardly allow the Second and Third *Persons* of the Trinity, to be the *Properties* of the Deity: if they do, it is in truth, giving up the *Athanasian Doctrine*; and the whole System dissolves into a speculative Dream of the Schools.

Again. To say that the *Father*, not from *Choice*, but *Necessity* of Nature, did Produce *two other Persons Equal with Himself*: seems to derogate from the *absolute Freedom* of God's *Will*; and, especially, it still maintains the old *Contradiction*, that *Effects* may be *Equal* to their *Cause*.

In a word. The visionary Doctrine, “ of “ Beings Issuing from the Deity without the

“Consent of his Will, *Equal* to Himself,” &c. seems utterly repugnant to every Idea we have of His Majesty, Freedom, and unrivalled Power*.

But it is probable that neither these Difficulties, nor any other that might be advanced, would ever have so much disturbed the minds of conscientious Men, had they not conceived that the whole Hypothesis herein contended against, is plainly dissonant not only to the dictates of human Reason, but also to the general spirit of *Revelation* itself.

It is freely confessed, on all sides, that our deductions often deceive ourselves:—that our *Reason* is truly weak and defective: but Im-

* The above notions have all been advanced by different Writers, in favour of the Athanasian doctrine; but as it appears that such Opinions will not stand the test of a close examination, it is unnecessary to refer the Reader to the writings which contain them.

The Ancient (*Ante-Nicene*) Christian Writers, unanimously agree in the Opinion that the *Son* was produced by the *Power*, *Will*, and *Design* of the FATHER; “When He *Willed* (says *Hippolytus*), and as He *Willed*.” The Doctrine of *Necessary Emanations*, “sprung (as Dr. *Clarke* observes) from the strange notions of *Valentinus*, *Cerinthus*, *Manes*, *Montanus*, &c.”

perfect as it is, and little as some affect to esteem it; it is still the gracious Gift of God; and, after all, is the only Light we possess to distinguish Truth from Falshood; Good from Evil. But the received System supposes the Deity to shut out this Light, in order to introduce another reflected from the Athanasian Creed, which blinds and confounds the most dignified Faculties He has bestowed upon us*. This CREED demands a faith arising from an arbitrary Sacrifice of the noblest Privilege of the Soul;—the Liberty of *Thinking* and *Reflecting*; and the Doctrines which are its genuine Offspring, very naturally, reprobate our assent to the plainest demonstrations *that* Liberty may afford us. WHILE we are awed by

* “ In the Article of the *Trinity* you have said all, that “ I think can be said upon so obscure and difficult “ an Argument.—The Account given of *Athanasius’s* “ *Creed*, seems to me no wise satisfactory; I wish we were “ well rid of it.”—*Archbishop Tillotson’s* letter to *Bishop Burnet*.—See the latter’s *History of his. own Times*, vol. ii, p. 719. This apparently hearty wish of a very learned and worthy Prelate, cannot be *too often* repeated, while the presumptuous unintelligible Composition he long since complained of, retains a place in our Prayer Books. It has still its admirers however, and even amongst the grossly Illiterate. It is, indeed, very natural with ignorance, to *admire* that *the most*, which is the *least understood*: But is *Credulity* Religion, and the uttering *Unintelligible Phrases* conducive to *Moral practice*?

the threatnings of this merciless Edict, and entangled by its incomprehensible Positions, the Mind, unable either to disregard its denunciations or unravel its perplexity, remains both afraid and unprepared, *to give a Reason of the hope that is in us.*

Chained for Ages as we have been, by *the Authorities of Men*, how long shall we continue enveloped in their Darkness, or bound down by their prejudices? And how do we reconcile such a gloomy, lethargic Captivity, to the cheerful and benevolent dictates of our Religion, which, in a language that comforts and expands the Heart, declares that, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty?*—2 Cor. iii, 17.

Submitting the above observations, however, to more enlightened Minds, and far from presumptuously *depending* upon any deductions of our own; we shall proceed to bring proofs of a more decisive nature, from the Old and New Testament, of the *Unity of God*, and (without multiplying Quotations too much), select a few which are strictly in Point; and as free from *intricacy* as they are from falshood. If words have any fixed signification, one should have thought that those which follow

from the sacred text were alone sufficient (had not experience taught us otherwise) to prevent the possibility of the least doubt or hesitation in the minds of men who pay any regard to Revelation.

It must be owned, that the ignorance of human nature, and our proneness to error are so great, that a prudent man is justly fearful of giving the reins to his own Imagination, in a matter of so vast Importance as this before us. We are moving on sacred ground, where every step should be taken with reverence and caution. In these most serious Inquiries, a vigilant guard on the mind is absolutely necessary; lest a favourite pursuit should hurry and delude our Judgment, and, what is of infinitely deeper concern, endanger our future Tranquility. The warm emotions of *Zeal*, may be checked by remembering that, Whenever *Reason* is forced to give place to our Passions or our Prejudices, *Truth* is very apt to retire also. But, in the present research, we venture not without a steady and faithful Guide, whose divine Counsels we shall endeavour to Obey: And, indeed, when we find the Testimony of the inspired Writings, so clear and strong in favour of *the absolute Unity of the Deity*; it appears to be a criminal weakness to withhold

our assent to a Truth, which so nearly concerns His Transcendent Glory; which frees us at once from all perplexity; meets the fullest investigations of human Reason; and administers to the believing Mind the invaluable blessings of Satisfaction and Peace. And it is, with great submission, offered to the serious Consideration of some men, whether, *from Experience*, any different Faith is ever likely to produce these Effects?—and whether, while they are maintaining with so sharp a Zeal, a system which acknowledges more *Objects* of Divine Worship than *One*, and transfers the most sacred Honours alternately from one to the other, they may not be too often in danger of Forgetting and Offending *Him*, the *Father Omnipotent*, Who hath declared that *He will not give His Glory unto another* (Isa. xlviii, 11 *), and *Whom*, our blessed Master, with an awful reference to His Power, has warned us to *Fear* above all?—Luke xii, 5.

* See also, Isa. xlii, 8, where we find the same Solemn Declaration from *the Lord God*; which appears the more Remarkable and Provident, as it Immediately follows a clear Prophecy concerning *Christ* and his office.

PROOFS
OF THE
UNITY OF GOD
FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

Hear, O Israel, The LORD our God is ONE LORD.
—Deut. vi, 4.

Thou shalt have no other Gods before ME.*
—Exod. xx, 3.

Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD HE is God in HEAVEN ABOVE and upon the Earth beneath: there is none else.—
Deut. iv, 39.

Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know

* Before me. The word *before*, seems here rather ambiguous in our language; and may appear to some to signify *above me*, or in *preference* to me. But the meaning is, “Thou shalt have no other Gods *in my Presence*” (which we all believe to be *Universal*); as is clear from similar Scripture Expressions; for instance, Abraham says to God (Gen. xvii, 18), “O that Ishmael might live *before thee!*” i. e. *in thy Presence*.

that the LORD HE is God, there is none else besides HIM.—Ibid. ver. 35.

See now that I, even I am HE, and there is no God WITH ME: &c.—Ibid. xxxii, 39,

To whom then will ye LIKEN ME, or shall I be EQUAL? saith the holy ONE.—Isa. xl, 18, 25; xlv, 5.*

I am the first, and I am the last, and besides ME there is no God.—Ibid. xlv, 6.

Is there a God besides ME? yea, there is no God: I know not any.—Ibid. ver. 8; see chap. xliii, 10.

* From these very words one would think that the Prophet foresaw the distracting Tenets of future times. Do either of the discriminating *Personal* terms, *One, he, him, I, me, thou, (thine own self,* Exod. xxxii, 13), in the Hebrew, or in any other language, imply or denote a *Plurality*? Such a perplexing opposition to all rule, or mental conception, would render any language vague and *Unintelligible*. What other sense, therefore, can we justly impute to the passages cited above, than that which is so distinctly impressed on the face of them? There are some men of talents in the world, who would persuade us that they can discover the deepest Mysteries through the thickest obscurity; and yet, unhappily (perhaps, from some remains of the darkness they have been intent upon, adhering to them), cannot readily discern or recognise plain Truth when presented to their eyes in bright day.

There is no God ELSE beside ME; a just God, and a Saviour: there is none beside ME.—Ibid. xlv, 21.

For I am God, and there is none ELSE: I am God, and there is none LIKE ME.—Ibid. xlvi, 9.

Among the gods there is none like unto THEE, O LORD; neither are there any works like unto Thy works.

All nations, whom THOU hast made, shall come and worship before Thee, O LORD; and shall glorify thy name.

For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things: THOU art God ALONE.—Psalm lxxxvi, 8, 9, 10.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever THOU hadst formed the earth and the world: even from everlasting to everlasting THOU art GOD.—Psalm xc, 2.*

THE 44th, 45th and 46th Chapters of the Prophet Isaiah contain a continual repetition of the Unity of the Deity; enforced in a most remarkable manner in the 45th. The holy *One*

* Some of the passages above, with many others, certainly militate directly against the notion of a *subordinate* Creator.

of Israel is the frequent Title of God throughout that Prophet, and his *Unity* very plainly expressed in *all the others* !

The *Prayer* of Hezekiah, must likewise appear so conclusive on this subject, to every unperverted Understanding, that the inserting a part of it here can need no apology. This Prayer was *heard*, and the signal Event which followed, shews that there is only *One* from Whom we may expect relief in the extremest *Exigencies*. *O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, THOU art The God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the Earth : THOU hast made heaven and earth.—Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his (Sennacherib's) hand, that all the kingdoms of the Earth may know that Thou art the LORD, EVEN THOU ONLY.—Isa. xxxvii, 16 —20 (Comp. Acts iv, 24 —31). Is it possible that the defenders of the Athanasian doctrine, should strain these words into any consonance with that System, without confounding all language, and converting the clearest expressions into Sophisms and Obscurity ? *How long, therefore, halt ye between two Opinions ? if the LORD be God, follow HIM.—1 Kings xviii, 21.**

The only times in which the ancient Hebrews and their Kings prospered, and obtained even a series of *Miracles* in their favour, were, when they adhered (as they had been often instructed) to *the Lord God alone*;—to only *One Object* of Divine Worship*. Indeed their happiness and safety absolutely depended upon the close observance of this fundamental Precept, to which all the others were subordinate. It is impossible to read the Old Testament without perceiving this. In that sacred Depository it is completely Evident throughout, that Moses and the prophets, who acted immediately under a *Divine Revelation*, acknowledged but One God, but *One Divine Person* or Intelligent Agent, and Worshipped *no other*. If, therefore, the present Doctrine of *Three Divine Persons* in

* See the Prayer of Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple (1 Kings, chap. viii); in which we may try in vain to discover any intimation of a *Trinity*. The whole address, offered on that Memorable occasion, is perfectly *Unitarian*:—and the unitarians have the comfort to believe, that the *Divine Glory* would certainly *not* have been supernaturally manifested (ver. 10, 11) to countenance the Solemnity, if the most Indispensable points of true Religious Worship, had then been (as all maintainers of *trinitarian* forms must suppose they were) either violated or forgotten.—See 2 Chron. vii, 1, 2, 3.

the Godhead, *each* of them Objects of Religious Worship, be true: It will follow, that the *Worship* so jealously and rigorously insisted on by Moses and the Prophets, must have been, in the very foundation, *Imperfect* or *Defective*. But it appears very harsh, if not Impious to conceive this. They were *taught of God*. It cannot then be presumptuous, we hope, to believe that the God of Light and Truth would assuredly have informed the Prophets, if there were any Others *whatsoever* to be acknowledged as God *besides Himself*: because any *Error* or *Defect* in that most *Essential* point would, in fact, have been as Great *then* as at this day. The New Testament is a Declaration of a *New and more glorious Covenant* with Man, by Jesus Christ; but not of any New or Different Objects of Worship. *It is written*, saith that Great Messenger, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and HIM ONLY shalt thou serve*.—Matt. iv, 10; Luke iv, 8. Our Saviour, most certainly, here refers to the strict Commands on this head, which are recorded so frequently in the Old Testament. The Revelations from God can in no wise be discordant, especially with respect to the *Object* of Religious Adoration. If there were *Three Different Persons* in the Godhead, EQUAL and ETERNAL, it is

hardly possible to conceive that *Two* of *Them* should have been wholly unnoticed When the OBJECT of Divine Worship was so Professedly and Openly *Declared* by the Prophets, on numberless occasions, and in the most solemn manner. Would the *Second* and *Third* Persons of the (supposed) Trinity, have been *then* neglected or past over? There can be little or no doubt but that *They* also would have had *Their Rights* as *clearly* Asserted and Proclaimed;—to the end that, all enlightened People, in every period, *in the times of the Prophets* as well as now, might *Discriminate* them in their *Worship*; administer the Honours *ever* justly due to *Each of Them*; and Implore *Their respective* Blessings and Protection*.

But the LORD our God, from whom *every* Blessing descendeth, and on Whom our very Existence continually and absolutely depends: *Who spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, and in these last days unto us by*

* The old Apology of the Fathers, viz. that “the ancient Hebrews were not taught the doctrine of the *Trinity*, “(by Moses, &c.) lest it should lead them into *Polytheism*,” will hardly be advanced by the Orthodox of this day; unless they can prove that all such danger is now removed.

*his Son**; and Who hath announced repeatedly that *He* has no *Equal*:—even HE, JEHOVAH, the Father Almighty, hath enjoined that *Divine Worship* shall peremptorily be confined to *One*

* Justin Martyr had a notion (which was imbibed by several of the subsequent Fathers) that it was *Christ* who spake to the Patriarchs and Prophets; that he was, in short, the *Ostensible* God of the Old Testament. This opinion of Justin's, it has been often shewn, is directly contradicted (as above) in the Epistle to the Hebrews; Heb. i, 1, 2; ii, 2, 3; ix, 26, 28. Where do we find our Saviour declaring that *he* had appeared or spoken to men in ancient times? on the contrary, he has confuted the notion himself, in his Parable of the Vineyard (Mark xii) in which he manifestly alludes to the *lateness* of *his* Administration, or communications with mankind.—See ver. 6; and also Matt. xxi, 37; 1 Peter i, 20.

St. Paul has been supposed to countenance Justin's opinion, 1 Cor. x, 9. *Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them (the Israelites) also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.* But, most probably, it should be, *neither let us tempt God, or the Lord* (and not *Christ*, as in some of our Copies). The Apostle manifestly refers to Numb. xxi, 5, 6 (See also Psalm lxxviii, 17, 18). It is said, by *Epiphanius*, that the passage in *St. Paul* was corrupted, at a very early period, by *Marcion*, who inserted *Christ* instead of *the Lord*.

It has been often maintained, that the Title or Name JEHOVAH, is very frequently applied to *Christ* in the Old Testament (upon the supposition that he was the ancient *Representative* of The Supreme Being, and appearing in the

Object, that is, to HIMSELF ONLY*; Who is represented as being tenacious of this His *distinguishing* or *Proper Glory*, which, it is apparent, He cannot share with any Other, without a palpable diminution of His own unspeakable Greatness and Dignity, and (what must be with Him a principal consideration) the evident consequence of giving birth to *Polytheism* and its pernicious Effects, amongst His creatures. To guard against this prevalent Mischief, we find the most undisguised and conclusive expressions used. *To whom will ye liken ME, and make ME equal, and compare ME, that we may be like ? For, I am God, and there is none else ; I am God, and there is none like ME. I am the first, and I am the last : and besides ME there is no God, &c.* If we are to be determined by the holy Scriptures, and the general acception of

Patriarchal times &c.) ; that he was a *second*, inferior *Jehovah*. But this notion is also overthrown in many parts of Scripture (seen more especially in the Hebrew original), and that sacred *Name* absolutely appropriated to *One*, to the *Most High*. For example:—*That men may know that Thou, whose Name ALONE is JEHOVAH, art the most High over all the earth.*—Psalm lxxxiii, 18 ; see Exodus vi, 2, 3.

* Exodus xx, 3 ; xxii, 20 ; xxxiv, 14 ; 1 Sam. vii, 3, 4, &c. &c. To which the words of Christ, Matt. iv, 10 ; Luke iv, 8, quoted above, are in exact agreement.

words, how shall we dare to pervert or explain away the plain sense of such awful declarations and demands ? and yet, the strong influence of prejudice has often incited men to attempt it, with the most heavy Threatnings against those who venture to distrust their intricate doctrines and opinions, which distract the written word, and make it of none effect :—but, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto men more than unto God, Judge ye.*

The Argument in the foregoing paragraph, is open to the most common Understanding, and requires but little Reflection : It will not be totally dropped in the ensuing pages : but we now proceed to the New Testament, which may be expected to agree with the Old, in the Fundamental *Truth* before us.

P R O O F S
 OF THE
U N I T Y
 FROM THE
N E W T E S T A M E N T.

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, is ONE Lord.—Mark xii, 29.

And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee (O Father) the ONLY True God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.—John xvii, 3.

There is ONE God, and there is None other but HE.
—Mark xii, 32.*

* “ It cannot be doubted but the Scribe, when he spake these Words, meant the *One Supreme Governor of the Universe*, even HIM who was known to the *Jews* by the Title of the *Creator of Heaven and Earth*, and who is declared to us Christians by the Title of the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.”

“ That the writers of the N. T.—and the Christian Writers in all Antiquity understood the Words, *one God*, to signify the *Father*; I have shewn by a very large Collection of Testimonies, in my *Scripture Doctrine*.”—Dr. Clarke, Works, Fol. edit. vol. iv, p. 268.

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save ONE, that is, GOD.—Luke xviii, 19; and Matt. xix, 17.

Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to MY God and your God.—John xx, 17.

To us there is but One GOD, the FATHER, of whom are all things, &c.—1 Cor. viii, 6.

It is ONE God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.—Rom. iii, 30.

For there is ONE God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.—1 Tim. ii, 5.

ONE God and FATHER of all, who is ABOVE ALL, and through all, and in you all.—Eph. iv, 6.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the ONLY wise GOD, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.—1 Tim. i, 17.*

See also, Acts xvii, 23, 24, 25; Gal. iii, 20; James ii, 19, comp. with iii, 9; Jude 4, &c.

* “It is a principle with me” (says a learned Trinitarian lately) “that the true sense of any phrase in the New Testament, is, what may be called its standing sense,

IF the doctrine of the *Trinity* had been as clearly and *peremptorily* insisted on in the *Scriptures*, as *Is the Positive Unity of God* ; no serious Believer in Revelation would have contended one moment for the latter.

But it may be expected that the *latter* will ever be *earnestly contended for*, since our sacred Records present to us such decisive declarations as the above ; which were certainly intended to free us from all dilemma, and to guard us against any deviation from the important Truth they enforce. “ If,” says a venerable writer, “ we cannot arrive at absolute certainty in this great Point (the

“ that which will be the first to occur to common people, “ of every country, and in every age.” This is, without doubt, a good general rule : let it be applied, therefore, to the citations above, which are made from both the sacred Books. Such plain and reiterated Testimony may have its proper effect. It is certain that those passages afford *some* of the strongest evidences that can be produced, at this day, of the *divine origin* of the *Scriptures* ; seeing *They were the First writings in the World* which discovered to Mankind, and declared in express terms, that great and leading Truth, *the Unity of our Almighty Creator* ; and indeed, *they were the only Documents*, for many Ages, which preserved and maintained that holy Doctrine, in direct opposition to those gross Polytheistic Principles, which, unhappily, overspread the greatest part of the Earth.

“ Divine *Unity*) by the Light of Nature, we
 “ ought to be the more thankful for the bene-
 “ fit of Revelation, which has put it past dis-
 “ pute *.”

Experience teaches us that this *Revelation* is directly consonant with our own feelings. The *Oneness* or *Unity* of the Supreme Being, is a Principle so easy and familiar to the Mind, that the generality of men (usually forgetting, or not attending to, their adopted creeds), when they suddenly Think of GOD, Think of Him, and immediately speak of Him as *One* absolutely, and not as *Three*. This natural bent or Inclination, hampered as we are, is found invincible; this steady tenacious light remains unextinguished in the hearts of men, notwithstanding the Doctrine of a *triune* Compound Deity, has been poured into their ears for Ages. Nor is this at all wonderful: For, besides the insuppressible efforts of our common Reason, it is certain, that the Prophets, the Apostles, and Christ himself, most plainly appear to think of God as *One* simply; to speak of Him as *One*, and address Him as *One*. It is not, therefore,

* Rev. Mr. *Law's* (late Bishop of *Carlisle*) Inquiry into the Ideas of Space, Time, Unity of the Divine Nature, &c. edit. 1734, p. 177.

until our prejudices in favour of Mystery are awakened ;—until we recollect, or are reminded of the Doctrine of a *Coequal Trinity*, that we feel ourselves perplexed and uneasy. In pursuing our serious reflections on this Doctrine and its Consequences, the Mind soon becomes filled with doubt and distress, and is generally, in the issue, thrown into commotion. If we would recover our serenity, we find ourselves obliged to drop so embarrassing a system, and recur to *the One God and merciful Father of All*.

It will doubtless, hereafter, appear astonishing that it should have been necessary, at this time of day, to recite authorities which have been open to the world for so long a period in the *Bible* ; for the purpose of establishing a *Truth*, which not only that enlightened Page, but also the whole surrounding Creation continually beareth witness of* !—*They*, however, must be accountable for such repetitions who seem determined to make them still necessary.

* Psalm xix. 1.—“The plain Connexion of one thing upon another, through the whole material Universe, through all Parts of the Earth, and in the visible Heavens; the Disposition of the Air, and Sea, and Winds; the Mo-

We cannot end this section without a remark on one of the Texts we have been quoting from the New Testament. Our Saviour, on a very solemn occasion, addresses himself directly to *the FATHER*, and affirms *Him* to be *the ONLY true God* (John xvii, 1, 3). Is it Possible, therefore, that any Being or Person *Different* from *the Father*, can be *the True God*? Or, that there can be any other *proper Object* of *Divine Worship*? It requires no small force upon the Mind to refuse our assent to this Declaration of our Lord's, which is clear and pointed. In vain may Prejudice lead us to other parts of Scripture which may *seem* to favour a *contrary Doctrine*. The sacred writings cannot be so dangerously inconsistent and

" tions of the Sun, Moon, and Stars: and the useful Vicissitudes of Seasons, for the regular Production of the various Fruits of the Earth; have always been *sufficient* to make it *evidently appear*, even to *mean Capacities* (had they not been perpetually *prejudiced* by wrong Instruction) that all things are under the Direction of *one Power*, under the Dominion of *One God*, to whom the whole Universe is uniformly Subject. And in fact,—the *wisest* and *best* Men, in all *Heathen Nations*, have ever seen, and in good measure maintained, this great Truth.—But it is with *greater Clearness* from all appearance of Doubt, and with *greater assurance of Authority*, confirming the Dictate of Reason, that *the Scripture sets forth to us this First Principle of Religion.*"
—Dr. Clarke's Post. Sermon. vol. i, Sermon. ii, p. 29, 30.

contradictory. This prime Article of Revealed Religion is devoid of all *Mystery* ; being expressly calculated to relieve the World from the endless darkness and confusion of Heathen Theology, to enforce the *true Unity* of God*, and to overthrow every species of false Worship;—this most easy comprehensive Information, is here delivered with equal strength and Perspicuity, leaving no just ground for suspense or evasion : For, it is certain that our Saviour could never have said in a fervent Prayer, or in any other instance, that *the FATHER is the ONLY true God*, if it had not been True in the fullest and most extensive sense. The occasion was momentous. He informs the World, just before his Crucifixion, that *Life Eternal* flowed from the Knowledge of *the ONLY true God*, and of *the gracious Messenger whom that God had sent*. The Knowledge of *the True God* is a Blessing of the Highest nature, for which, neither we nor any created beings, can possibly be too deeply Thankful. And the knowledge of *Jesus Christ* is also essential to our happiness : Because it includes the knowledge of the *Doctrines* of this divine Messenger (2 John 9);

* IDOLATRY, is the dividing of God, from One into Many.—Clem. Alexandrinus; see Dr. Samuel Clarke's Works, Fol. edit. vol. iv, p. 416.

ch were given to him, by the good and merciful Father of Mankind (John xii, 49, 50), that might deliver them from the deplorable consequences of Vice, and gross Ignorance; from the mitious Effects of savage brutality, and the wretched errors into which they had fallen. He faithfully laboured to accomplish:—ling them with a gentle hand, into the icious Light of a rational, pure, and most Religion; Inspiring them, by his own Example, with active Virtue, Piety, unconfined volence, Humility, Resignation;—qualifying them by degrees for a State of consummate iness, which, we are assured, shall be ut diminution and without End! These iples have been justly said to contain the ance of the Christian Dispensation; but have not been satisfied with them: The luction of a mysterious Hypothesis, which zes them of all their Simplicity, and the aining of some Selfish Opinions, which o destroy the cheerful Hope of the all-ex-ig Mercy and Compassion of the General t, have thrown the World again into a of darkness, doubt, and Contention.

the awful voice speaking by the Prophets, will not be in Vain. *The loftiness of shall be bowed down*:—the Time will

come, and we hope it is now fast approaching, when *the Sanctuary shall be cleansed* (Dan. viii, 14), when the Vanity of human System will be felt and humbly Acknowledged; the Nations of the Earth be brought to a just sense of their Duty to their Great Creator; *and the LORD alone shall be exalted* in that Day*, —Isa. ii, 11, 17.

I have sworn by MYSELF, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness; and shall not return; That unto ME every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.—Ibid. xlv, 23.

That they may know, from the rising of the Sun, and from the West, that there is none besides ME. I AM THE LORD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE.—Ibid. xlv, 6.

* i. e. Shall alone be *Glorified* in the Highest Sense.

OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ὁ ΘΕΟΣ.

JOHN IV, 24.

The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.—2 Sam. xxiii, 2.

But there is a spirit in Man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.—Job xxxii, 8.

SINCE the Supreme Being is declared in the sacred oracles to be strictly and truly ONE; therefore, by the *Holy Spirit* appears to be meant *no other* than *the Spirit of the Almighty himself* * (and indeed often so called in the Bible); comprehending the same ineffable *Power* that was exerted in the *Creation*, and which

* It sometimes implies his *effective Power*;—sometimes his divine *Illuminations*, said (Acts ii, 17) to be “*Poured out by Him* (or *effused*) *upon all flesh*;” and, therefore, in such instances cannot signify a *Person*.

eternally pervades the whole Universe, and every individual therein, material or Immaterial!

The holy Scriptures are full and decisive in declaring this astonishing Fact*: and the natural consequence of the OMNIPRESENCE of the Deity, is, that there can be no real Necessity for any Power different from His own, in the General *Government* of the Universe†. His Spirit or Intelligence is Infinite, or absolutely Unbounded. “His Wisdom and Power are “always working, in the wild desert, in the “deep ocean, within and about ourselves‡.” He is a *searcher of the Heart*. Happy are they who stand fair in His Records. Not only the Actions of all His creatures are continually exposed to Him, but the operations of the Mind also. Not a Thought that passes in man, or

* Jeremiah xxiii, 24; Acts xvii, 27, 28; Eph. iv, 6; Heb. iv, 13.—See *Matho.* vol. i, p. 273; and Duncan’s *Baxter*, p. 18, &c.

† Nevertheless, Innumerable beings, of different Orders, throughout the Universe, may occasionally be made His *Instruments*, under His all-ruling Providence; and doubtless may experience the greatest happiness in being so employed.

‡ Duncan’s *Baxter*, page 38.

in any other being, can possibly escape Him ! Tremendous as this is, we cannot doubt the Truth of it, if we reflect a moment that, were it otherwise, His Knowledge or Perception must be *limited*, and Himself and His Government, in course, Defective :—but these opinions, which were anciently entertained, were the offspring of Ignorance ; and would be now, at once, rejected with scorn, both by the rational Philosopher and the Christian.

The Apostle *Paul* has plainly intimated that the all-permeating Spirit of the Deity, sometimes acted on the *Conscience* of himself, and his fellow Christians, as an *Aid* or Support to that internal Judgment of themselves.—Rom. viii, 16 ; ix, 1. It must, indeed, be allowed, that the first Christians had far more sensible and illustrious tokens of the Divine Influence, than the most pious can now expect ; the necessity for such very extraordinary Interpositions, not being now the same. Virtuous men have, notwithstanding, a sure promise of every needful assistance ; and it is certain that God hath not left us without an intrinsic witness of Himself. The *Conscience*, that kind informing Principle, the gracious gift of *the Father of lights*, is an affecting evidence of His care ; and it would be well if we could all be persuaded strictly to

obey its admonitions. He has, however, been pleased to leave it in our power to disobey them. The reasons for this, in a *Probatory* state, are obvious. Even the Divine Influence bestowed upon the first Christians, was not *Irresistible*, nor intended to be so. They were left free in their *determinations*. We, therefore, find them warned by St. Paul, *not to do despite unto the Spirit of grace:—not to quench the Spirit, &c.* We should steadily use the like caution not to resist the dictates of the *Conscience*; for, whenever God is pleased to grant us any internal directive assistance, it, most probably, acts *there**.

The sinning wilfully against *the special emo-*

* We are very far from wishing to countenance any superstitious or enthusiastic notions; but it cannot be supposed that the Supreme Being has so bound Himself by general or fixed laws, as to utterly prevent His affording *any* spiritual Assistance whatsoever to His creatures, in any circumstances. Under *Mental* (as well as under *Bodily*) Afflictions, we Pray for comfort and support;—can it be imagined that He will give *None*? (The *mode* of administering assistance, indeed, must be left to Himself.) As the Mind is the spring of *Action*, probably, the timely *awakenings* supposed above, may sometimes be given because the *Consequences* of human Actions, frequently spread wide and deep; affecting multitudes, as well as the Individual who may be the original cause. The merciful inten-

*tions of the Conscience**, must certainly be an heinous Offence; obstinately perpetrated, assuredly under the *Inspection*, and it is much to be feared, directly against the Inclination of the Supreme Being himself; Who, on momentous occasions, may be more intimately concerned in those surprising *emotions*, and more regardful of their effects, than we are usually aware of: although He cannot be supposed absolutely to *overrule* either the actions or the resolutions of Free Agents;—If, however, He ever doth, it must be for the very best purposes, and *then* the Event belongs not properly to them, but rather to Him, on Whom all *events* must ultimately depend,

tion of such Providential Interpositions will be, therefore, readily conceived. But, as *Dr. Jortin* has very judiciously observed, the Divine Assistance still “*leaves us free Agents; it compels not, but only inclines and aids, and that it may be resisted.*” — *Jortin's Sermons.*

* When the Good in *refraining*, and the Evil in *perpetrating*, are distinctly present in the Mind. The perverse choice of doing Evil, in such a case (in spite of the sollicitous struggles *within*), is, perhaps, the most arbitrary and *affecting* Proof of the *Freedom* of Man in this respect. But the *Conscience* will still re-exert its Powers, sometimes even in the most Abandoned, with severe retaliation.

Restraints and encouragements are equally necessary, we find, in the wisest human institutions; and they appear to be made use of in a certain degree, in the moral Government of the World, by the Supreme Governor himself, often on occasions where human power cannot possibly reach. This opinion is countenanced by the general voice of Revelation; and it seems reasonable to hope from the boundless Goodness of God, and from His *Infinite Perception*, that He will not wholly expose so frail a being as man, to the miserable consequences of his Imperfection; but will mercifully administer all the proper checks and encouragements, which his nature and situation may require. And it is to *Him* alone, the Universal Parent, that in gratitude we should ascribe every salutary warning, and every Spiritual consolation.

We shall pass on to our chief design, which is to shew, that, by the *Holy Spirit*, the sacred writers intended the Supreme Being himself, or, His *Wisdom* and *Power*, which, being sufficiently communicated to His several Messengers, enabled them to prophecy, to inculcate Truth, and to perform Miracles. The simplicity of these Principles, will, indeed, but ill accord with the subtile speculations and ideal

distinctions, which have engrossed the minds of men for more than 1,400 years, but we shall find them amply supported by the Gospel, *whence they take their rise*; recommending themselves by their very simplicity at once to the heart and understanding.

BLASPHEMY AGAINST GOD'S SUPERNATURAL
MANIFESTATIONS NOT TO BE FORGIVEN.

OUR Saviour tells the Scribes (Matt. xii, 31, 32), that *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come*. Now those men, filled with malice, were denying and blaspheming the holy Ghost, at the very time he said these words (which indeed occasioned them), for they, with great dissimulation, affirmed that our Lord had a *Devil*, that he was confederate with *Beelzebub*, when he was *casting out Demons* by the immediate cooperation of the holy Spirit, or *Power of God** (Matt. xii, 28). *But if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you*. This

* Allusively *finger of God*.—Luke xi, 20. Aaron is said to work a Miracle by the same means (*by the finger of God*).—Exodus viii, 17, 19.

verse has reference to the severe denunciation above, and plainly declares, that the Holy Spirit is no other than *the Spirit of our God*; that it is precisely so meant in the Scriptures*;

* 1 Cor. vi, 11; see Matt. x, 20; which compare with Luke xii, 12; Acts ii, 4, 16, 17, 18; Rom. viii, 11, 14; 1 Cor. ii, 10—14; Ibid. iii, 16; compare with Ibid. vi, 19 (and with 2 Cor. vi, 16); Ibid. vii, 40; Ibid. xii, 3; Eph. iv, 30; Heb. x, 15, 16. These texts alone, when *compared* and attentively considered, seem to fix this point beyond any rational doubt.—It may be observed, that the Holy Ghost is, in a few places of Scripture, termed *he*; when, it appears, the Father *himself* is meant; and sometimes, *it*, or *itself*; when the Spirit or *Influence* of the *Father* is understood; this may be generally discovered by the Context. When, therefore, we pray to God, in conformity to the Scriptures, *for the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the assistance of the Holy Spirit, &c.* we then, undoubtedly, pray for the assistance of *God himself*. Were the Holy Ghost (or holy Spirit) really a *distinct Person*, it is wonderful that we should in *no place* of sacred writ be instructed to offer *any* supplications to this *different Divine Person*, whose *peculiar* gifts we mean to implore: on the contrary, we are uniformly directed *in Scripture*, to address our prayers and thanksgivings to God (the Father) *only*, from *whom* we are expressly told *every* blessing *spiritual* and temporal cometh.

We learn from Ecclesiastical History that the worship of the holy Ghost, as a *Person* different from God, the Father, was not introduced into the Church until its *Doctrines* began to be grossly corrupted; and even then not without much Opposition. This circumstance is well worth atten-

and the context shews also, that those people, the Scribes and Pharisees, were sinning against the strongest reprehensions of their own *Consciences*; for they could not, as our Saviour observes, possibly *believe*, “ that *Satan was casting out Satan* and thereby *destroying his own Kingdom*. They contumaciously resisted and gave the lie, therefore, on a great and affecting occasion, to their own *inward* feelings and conviction; and moreover *uttered* a most impious Insinuation*, which, in the Gospel language, was *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, —the all-quickenng Spirit or Energy of the Supreme Being! which, while it manifested by a gracious *Miracle*, that the *Divine Power* was eminently present with our Saviour, did not fail to enable him to detect their inmost thoughts, and to expose immediately their malicious hypocrisy and falshood. Hence, and

tion. Gregory Nazianzen, who lived towards the end of the fourth century, says, that the *Heretics* (as he called them) of his day, asked, “ *Who ever worshipped the Spirit, either of the ancients or moderns?*” And Basil, who flourished in the same period, makes heavy complaints of the great uneasiness and violence of the people, occasioned by some new *doxologies* and phrases, which he seems to have introduced upon the same subject.—See Dr. Priestley’s *Learned and Valuable History of early opinions concerning Jesus Christ*, vol. ii, p. 326 — 329.

* Mark iii, 30.

from the texts below, it will appear, that the terms *Holy Ghost*, or *Holy Spirit*, *Power of God*, *Divine Presence*, &c. are *Identical*, and *referrable* to God *alone* *. It is easy to discern from the warmth with which Christ declared the dreadful consequences of blaspheming the Spirit or Power by which he acted (and from the distinctions which he makes, Matt. xii, 31, 32), that he considered it, in effect, as the blaspheming of *God himself*. And the relation of the Deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, in the *Acts*, among many other Instances, demonstrates that the Apostles held this very Doctrine †.

We shall endeavour to confirm the Truth of the foregoing Positions, by a series of Evidence from the Old and New Testament, in which, we think, it will be clearly discerned, what slender foundation we have, to distinguish the operations of the Holy Spirit from the opera-

* See Notes † and *, page 58 and 83.

† Acts v :—Where (it is almost unnecessary to observe) in the 3d and 4th verses, *God* and the *Holy Ghost* are very naturally and expressly made *the same*. The awful catastrophe of Ananias and Sapphira (convicted by St. Peter of having *tempted*, by their falshood, “*the Spirit of the Lord*”), strongly marks the high Displeasure of the Deity against those who wilfully sin, in defiance of the upright suggestions of the *Conscience*.

tions of God *himself** ; and again, how inconsistent it is to consider *that*, as a *Person*, which is described below to be a *Power* communicable by an Apostle, but flowing Primarily from the *Deity*, as from its Source, and modified according to *His* divine Will.

Have ye, says St. Paul, received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? and they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost : i. e. given.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the holy Ghost came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.—Acts xix, 2, 6†.

Thus we find this divine effusion, this *Gift of*

* We do, and may very properly, distinguish the *Power* of God from his *Wisdom* and *Omniscience* ; His *Justice* from His *Goodness* or *Mercy*, &c. But in whatever manner these, or any other of his Attributes may be exemplified (as in the instance of Ananias and Sapphira), they are, in reality, still inseparable from his *own Person* or *Substance*, even in *Idea*.—And so indeed the Apostle hath shewn us.

† See John xx, 22 ; and observe the remarkable action of our Saviour, which shews plainly what is *there** signified by the Holy Ghost : viz. not a *Person*, but an *holy inspiration*.

GOD*, was suffered to be *imparted* by the Apostles to their Converts or Disciples; which surely shews, beyond any reasonable doubt, that by the holy Spirit, is here meant the *Operative Power* of God, and not a *Person*. For it should be noticed, that it was the Holy Spirit *Itself* which is thus said to be Imparted;—not a Power *from* a Divine being *distinct* from God or *the Father*:—But from *whom* these Spiritual excellencies were truly derived, will appear in the next Paragraph.

Now, there are, says the Apostle, diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.—And there are diversities of operations, but it is the Same God who worketh all in all.—1 Cor. xii, 4, 6, 11; compare Philipp. ii, 13.

St. Paul, who here tells us that, it is the *Same God* who *worketh all in all*, or *whom*, by the fulness of His Operations, effecteth *all things*, has likewise assured us that there is but *One* God, and that this *One God* is *the Father* (1 Cor. viii, 6); Christ himself expressly confirms this (John xvii, 1, 3). It follows that

* John vii, 39; Acts v, 32; viii, 19, 20; xi, 16, 17; xv, 8; Rom. i, 11; 1 Thesa. iv, 8; 2 Tim. i, 6, 7; Titus iii, 4—7; Heb. vi, 4.

there can be no *different* source of these spiritual Gifts. Taking this important Intelligence along with us, the passages quoted will throw a strong light on the subject immediately before us; as they discover that the *holy Spirit* of the Scriptures, must, most frequently, signify, either the effluxes of *Divine Virtue*, or the *inspirations* of the *Almighty**, so graciously infused by Him into the Prophets of old, and still more illustriously and fully communicated to Christ *especially*, and afterwards to his Apostles†—A *miraculous Power* proceeding from the Deity, *centering* in him *alone*, and as *inherent* in Him as any other of his glorious Attributes.

That *David* considered the *holy Spirit* in this very light, is sufficiently clear from the following instances. In his fervent Prayer to God (Psalm li, 11), he thus expresses himself. *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not Thy holy Spirit from me.* Where it is plain, from the last words, that the royal prophet con-

* Yet many years didst Thou forbear them (the rebellious and obdurate Israelites) and testifiedst against them, by thy Spirit (Inspiration) in thy Prophets.—See Neh. ix, 29, 30.

† See Luke i, 68, 70; iv, 18, 21; 1 Cor. xii, 28; Ephes. i, 3.

ceived this Divine Assistance to *depend* entirely on the Will of the Almighty *himself*; and, consequently, did not believe it to be under the direction or control of any *different Person or Being*: Again (in Psalm cxxxix, 7, 8), *God and His Spirit*, are considered as the *very same Divine Person*: *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit; or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there also, &c.* It is in this sense that we find ourselves obliged to understand what is said of the holy Spirit (with very few exceptions) throughout the Bible.

In Luke i, 68, 70, to which we have just referred below, *the Lord God of Israel* is said to *have spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets*; and if the *holy Spirit* had been there said to have spoken by the Prophets, the Jews, or the first Jewish Christians (who certainly were best acquainted with their own Idiom, and who never conceived any real difference between the Spirit of God, and God Himself), would have understood the phrase to signify *exactly* the same.

Thus St. Paul says (Acts xxviii, 25—27), *Well spake the holy Ghost by Esaias, &c., on*

turning to the passage to which the Apostle refers (Isa. vi, 8—10), we find that it was *the LORD* (in many Hebrew MSS. JEHOVAH) who spake by the Prophet; and we cannot be at a loss to know *Who* is designed by *the LORD*, on such occasions, in the Old Testament.

It appears, that the *Divine Afflatus*, by which the servants of God uttered their Predictions, is, by them, emphatically called *the holy Spirit*, or, when the *Efficient* is directly adverted to, *the LORD himself*.

This is shewn again more clearly, Heb. x. 15, &c. The Apostle says (citing from the Old Testament), *Whereof the holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the LORD (Hebrew, JEHOVAH), I will put my laws into their hearts,"* &c. The xxxi chapter of Jeremiah is here referred to, ver. 33, 34; and if we compare these passages of the Prophet with Heb. x, 15, 16. 17 (and with viii, 8—12), we shall perceive, that the terms *holy Ghost*, *the LORD*, and *God*, are therein used *Synonymously*, as in several other instances; all alluding to *God Himself*, and His Spiritual

communications.—See Acts iv, 24, 25 ; compare chap. i, 16.

Indeed, St. Peter tells us, that it was God *who spake by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began.*—Acts iii, 21 ; which compare with Hosea xii, 10.

Although we sometimes meet with expressions in Scripture, less clear than this of St. Peter, yet they should not move us, or incline us to think that the sacred writers ever meant to wander at all from their leading Article, *the Unity of God*, or to differ essentially from each other on any matter of high concern. In the following passage, notwithstanding the mode of delivery, the *self-same Cause*, is without doubt intended. Elihu says (Job xxxiii, 4), *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.* The expression, indeed, is redundant (which is common in the Oriental style), but surely we cannot understand by it, *Two Omnipotent Creators of the same Individual.* And yet even this extravagant Opinion was not without Advocates in former ages, though it is utterly destitute of foundation, either in Scripture or in Reason.

It may not be improper to observe here, that several of the early Fathers of the Church (upon whose authority we rely to this hour, in many of our solemn rites, and forms of worship), were strangely infatuated with the visionary tenets of *Gentile Philosophy**. The doctrines of *Plato* especially, were, it seems, highly

* See Mosheim's Eccl. History; and also Middleton on *Miraculous Powers*; wherein the gross Credulity and absurd Doctrines of some even of the most ancient Fathers, are sufficiently demonstrated from *their own Writings*.

The notion of considering the *Attributes* of the Supreme Being as *distinct Deities* or *Persons*, is of very antique standing. It seems to have had its birth in the *Poetic* language of the *East*: Thence *Plato* (it is said) borrowed it; who ingrafted it into his Theology, and taught it *literally*.

The following curious *forgery* discovers the indiscreet zeal of some ancient Christians for the doctrine of the Trinity, and from *what authority* they sometimes ventured to derive it:

Πρῶτα Θεός, &c.

First God, and then the Sonne, and next the Spirit,
All coeternal, one in act and merit.

This is an answer declared to have been given by the god *Serapis*, to *Thules*, a king of Egypt during the *Trojan Wars*, on his inquiring, "Who was most blessed?"—Vid. *Vives* on *Augustine's Civ. Dei*, b. x, c, 23.

venerated amongst them* ; and it is much to be feared (notwithstanding their great merit in other respects), that they ventured, in some of their religious Institutes, to blend the most esteemed of the Heathen dogmas with the pure Precepts of our heavenly Master :—that, wandering from the clear paths of the Gospel, they lost themselves in the mazes of *Science, falsely so called*. And, indeed, one should imagine, with regard to the present subject, that those early Converts to Christianity, allured by the pleasures of philosophic speculation, or seduced by the force of long custom and Example, had declined from their heavenly Guide, and unhappily fallen back again, in some measure, into the strong and prevailing tide of Polytheism. Thus, as the Grecians had converted the *wisdom* of Jupiter into a Goddess ; so they, *Per-*

* *Justin Martyr* mentions, that “ he had been induced “ to embrace *Christianity*, by the Study of *Plato’s* Philosophy :” and *St. Augustin* says (*Confess.* b. 8), that “ he “ had read the *beginning* of *St. John’s* Gospel (*In the beginning was the Word*), in *Plato*, though not in the same “ words.”—*Vives* on *Civ. Dei*, N. P. 380. *Augustin* could not mean that *St. John* had borrowed from *Plato*, but that the Apostle and the Philosopher appeared to agree in their Doctrine concerning *the Word*. In this, however, the venerable Father was most probably mistaken.

sonifying the Divine Attributes, resolved the Wisdom and Power of the Supreme Being* into a *distinct* Deity (and the like strange hypothesis had been adopted before, with respect to our Saviour's Origin); and then, by the subtilest refinements, they in vain endeavoured to preserve the divine *Unity*, which Christ and the Prophets had taught the World, and which the airy delusions of a borrowed Philosophy had clouded and confounded†.

* The *holy Ghost* is plainly called the *Wisdom, Might, or Power of God*.—Isa. xi, 2; Luke xi, 49; xxiv, 49; 1 Cor. ii, 4—7; Eph. i, 17. This easily accounts for the putting the Holy Ghost *sometimes* in Scripture for *God himself*.

† The opinion of the eternal Deity (as it is generally called) of our Saviour, seems to have sprung from the same extraneous source. The following observable *confession* will shew the lasting hold that speculative doctrines, sanctioned by great names, will sometimes have on the wisest Men. It is taken from the Commentaries of a man of much piety and excellent sense, the learned John Ludovicus Vives, on St. Augustine's famous work *de Civ. Dei*, Note on c. 29, b. x. "*We,*" says Vives, "*teach it out of Plato, that by the word of God were all things made, and out of Plotine, that the Sonne of God is the Creator.*" This *teaching* from the heathen Philosopher and his disciples, caused the *Bible* to be read through a false medium, and has done no small mischief to Christianity. The Attach-

Those who are at all acquainted with the writings of the Fathers, of whom we have been speaking, will not think the foregoing opinion ill-founded. To any dispassionate reader of their works, it must appear that several of those learned Converts from Paganism, newly inlisted under the Ensigns of the Christian Faith, seem to have willingly laid hold of any passage in the sacred writings (taking advantage sometimes of the Phraseology) that might countenance, or in some sort, indulge the remains of their affection for the *Platonic System*, which it is evident many of them were loth wholly to relinquish. Besides, their situation was particular. Surrounded by the unconverted Gentiles, they might flatter themselves that some complying accommodation to the most refined of their old Principles, would render their new Profession more palatable to those Idolators; and lead them more willingly into the paths of Christianity. However this be, it appears

ment of many of the Fathers to the *Platonic* doctrines, strangely entangled them and their followers, and renders their Authority, in some respects, very suspicious. In short, it is now acknowledged that, we have been seduced, almost irrecoverably, by the ethnic follies of Anti-quity.

that several of the Fathers thought they had discovered room for some indulgence in their former Philosophic Speculations, even in the Gospel itself: and therefore they did not scruple sometimes to mould its Principles into a Form, which their deep-rooted prejudices, and the polytheistic malady of the Gentiles, inclined them in general to admire*.

The times in which the Fathers flourished, and the highly favoured Philosophy of those times, will strongly plead in Excuse for some of the mistakes into which they certainly fell.

* We are frequently referred to the ancient Fathers of the Church (who were sometimes very far from being Consistent with themselves) in order to fix our *present* Faith and Mode of Worship. But it requires the greatest Caution how we adopt the Opinions and Practice of the Fathers *in those respects*? Because, notwithstanding their acknowledged Piety, and Historical usefulness, most of their Tenets and Writings (especially those produced since the third Century) are totally subversive of *Protestantism*; often charged with the most confused and absurd Doctrines, without any foundation in the Bible, and calculated chiefly to support those very Corruptions which have separated us from the Church of Rome. Have we not, by the blessing of God, the Scriptures Themselves handed down to us? and is it really *still* a question, whether we are to make those *Holy Records* the Rule and Measure of

Their singular Piety, Learning, and above all, their warm Affection, and immoveable attachment to the Christian Cause, amidst a host of barbarous and determined Opponents*, well deserve our reverence, emulation, and sincere applause. But an undistinguishing Obedience to *all* the Opinions they held, some of which were unfortunately tinged with *the wisdom of this World*, and became a source of much disgraceful Animosity among themselves, would involve us in a series of perplexing Difficulties and Inconsistencies, which the clearer light of the present day plainly enough exposes, and

our Faith, or the Doctrines and Principles of those very Fathers who were the Founders of the Romish Superstitions?—Who, indeed, are of use “to inform us what *they* “believed and practised, but not always what *ought to be* “believed and practised.” “It would be better,” says Dr. Jortin, “for a Christian to take the precepts of Christ and “the undoubted writings of the Apostles for the *Rule* of his “Faith and Practice, and to conform to primitive Christianity just as far as primitive Christianity is conformable “to Scripture and to Reason.”—Rem. Eccl. His. vol. i, p. 281.

* The Pagans, so late as the fourth Century, were wont to charge the *Christians* as the Cause of almost every *Public Calamity* that happened:—An impious Sect, said those Idolators, equally detested by the Gods and by men.—Vid. August. Civ. Dei, b. ii, cap. 3.

which all the labour and art of man can never reconcile.

With regard to the point we are now endeavouring to explain, it, indeed, appears, that some of the *earlier* Christian writers, were far from considering the holy Spirit as a *Person*, and different from *the Father*. We shall only produce two instances, which will shew this pretty clearly.

“*Irenæus*,” who lived about the year 170, “seems to have considered the holy Spirit as a “divine influence, and no proper person. By “*the name of Christ*, he says, *we are given* “*to understand one who anoints, one who is* “*anointed, and the Unction with which he is* “*anointed. It is the Father who anoints,* “*but the Son is anointed, in the Spirit, which* “*is the Unction; as the word says by Isaiah;* “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because “he has anointed me; *signifying the Father* “*anointing, the Son who is anointed, and the* “Unction, *which is the Spirit*.*”

* *Dr. Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*, vol. ii, p. 272; see book ii, p. 270, section 1, wherein several other instances are produced, of the like sentiments of the Fathers, in relation to the *Holy Spirit*, before the Council of Nice.

This explication of *Irenæus* accords with the words of the Apostle *John*, who says to Christians (1 *John* ii, 20), *Ye have an UNCTION from the Holy One, and ye know all things* (see also ver. 27). By this sacred *Unction* is assuredly meant, what is elsewhere termed the *holy Spirit*, or, as *St. Paul* expresses it, *the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation*, which is the Gift of God, the Father.—Eph. i, 3, 13; 17 *.

In several other places of Scripture, what is said of the holy Ghost, will not agree with the idea of a *Person*, but accords perfectly well with the idea of a *spiritual Grace*, or *Power*, flowing from *God*. Thus, by the *living water*, which our Saviour tells the Samaritan woman is *the Gift of God*, is meant the *holy Spirit*.—John iv, 10 ; vii, 38, 39 †.

It doth not appear, that the *distinct Divinity*,

* Acts x, 38 ; “ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with *the holy Ghost, and with power.*” This manner of expression must appear very harsh and unnatural, if the Apostle, by the *holy Spirit*, here meant a *Person*.

† When Christ says, *I am the living bread*, &c., he alludes to his *Doctrine*, certainly not to his *Person*.—See John vi, 51 ; which compare with ver. 63.

or *Personality* of the *Holy Spirit*, was settled, or generally acknowledged among Christians, even in the time of *Hilary*, who lived much later than Irenæus (about the Year 354). Hilary “represents our Saviour commanding the “Apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, “the Son, and the holy Spirit (Matt xxviii, “19), as signifying a *Confession of the Father, “of the only begotten, and of the Gift*; which “very much resembles what Irenæus says on “the subject*.”

But how highly soever the characters and authority of these, and other primitive Saints, of the Church (as they are sometimes called), might have been esteemed, their sentiments on this subject, in a few generations afterwards, must have been stigmatized, by their more enlightened Successors, as absolutely heretical if not blasphemous.

IT is very observable that St. John, the most lofty and *Figurative* writer of all the Evangelists, is (speaking under correction) the only one of them who *seems*, in a few passages, directly to *Personify* the Holy Ghost; or to

* Dr. Priestley's *His. of Early Opinions, &c.*, vol. ii, p. 284.

make it an Agent *distinct* from God*. But, when all reasonable allowances are made for his Exalted Style, he cannot, without great affectation, be supposed to contradict himself on so important a matter:—for (besides his

* See John xiv, 16, 17, 26; xvi, 7, 13. These texts, in particular, it is confessed, are greatly in favour of the distinct *Personality* of the holy Spirit, and have inclined several worthy men to believe that the holy Spirit is indeed a *Person*, but yet far inferior (as indeed these texts imply) to the *Father*;—a *Ministring* Spirit of the very highest Order, but *not* an Object of *Religious Worship*. We are not concerned to controvert *this* Opinion; but would rather leave it to the judgment of all, whether the weight of sacred Evidence produced in these pages, doth not, upon the whole, render the doctrine we have offered, greatly the more consistent of the two? The *Comforter* promised in St. John, appears, by the Event, to have been a miraculous transfusion of *Spiritual gifts* and *Power from on high*;—Affording a Public proof of the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord:—He had *Foretold* this further wonderful Confirmation of his Heavenly Mission;—this Important Signal of his Triumphant entrance into Glory. —Compare *Luke* xxiv, 26, 49, with *Acts* chap. ii.

“ There is not, in the Acts, of the Apostles, or any other “ Book of the New Testament, any account of the appearance and manifestation of a great Agent, or *Person*, “ after our Saviour’s Ascension. Therefore, no such thing “ was promised, or intended by our Saviour, nor expected “ by the Apostles, who could not but know his meaning.” —Dr. Lardner: see his *First Postscripts* to his Letter on the *Logos*, p. 87, &c.

own intimations of what is to be understood by the holy Spirit (1 John ii, 20, 27), his declarations that *All Power* is derived alone from God the Father, are, perhaps, as explicit as any throughout the whole Bible. A remark lately made by a learned Writer*, will help us to judge of the Oriental Idioms contained in the sacred writings. He very justly reminds us that *Wisdom* is made a *Being* in the viii of *Proverbs*, and that *Charity* is directly *Personified* by St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xiii, as is also the *Wisdom* of God (Luke xi, 49†); but no one can possibly understand such language in a *literal* sense; unless, as the same Writer observes, it be from a predetermination to support a favourite Hypothesis.

We humbly apprehend that it is in the like Animated manner with the last mentioned instances, that St. John, in recording the sublime

* See Mr. Lindsey's *Catechist*, p. 104, 105.

† Other remarkable instances of this enlivened style of the East (viz. the change of Things or Qualities into *Persons*) may be seen in the Ancient (Apocryphal) Book called the Wisdom of Solomon, chap. vi, vii, viii, ix, &c.

Discourses of Christ, has *Personified* the Divine Assistance of God : for it appears highly injurious to suppose that this Apostle, who was himself a Jew, would superinduce *another* God, in express contradiction to his own writings*, to the declarations of his Beloved Master, of Moses, and all the Prophets.

There is a passage of St. Paul, written in the same Elevated style, which, at first sight, might lead to the prevailing Opinion, viz. the *distinct* existence of the Holy Ghost. It is in Rom. viii, 26, 27 ; where he says, *the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities*. And again, *The Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*. Yet the whole tenour of this chapter, if read with attention, will satisfy an impartial Mind, that the Holy Ghost is no other than the Most holy Spirit of God : and it is not difficult to perceive that the Apostle means here, that the *Grace* of God aideth us against our infirmities ; —and that His *Mercy* pleadeth strongly for us. And indeed how often in scripture is it said, in compliance with our feelings, that the tender Compassion of God intercedeth for his

* John xvii, 3.

Creatures :—that His Mercy to our weaknesses and infirmities is longsuffering and unspeakable ;—that He sees and laments our Perverseness, *until his Spirit will no longer strive with man* ? Accordingly, Christians were cautioned *not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God*. St. Paul goes on to say that, *the Spirit maketh Intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God*. But *who knoweth the Will of God, but the Spirit of God, or God himself* ? None*, as the words of the same Apostle clearly imply (1 Cor. ii, 11), where he compares *the intimate knowledge that a man's Spirit only can have of himself, with the knowledge which God's Spirit alone can have of the things of God*. Hence we may infer that St. Paul, neither in the above instances, nor in any other, ever means to distinguish *positively* the Holy Spirit from God *himself*. Indeed, the Apostle some-

* *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught Him ? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of Judgment ? &c.*—See Isa. xl, 13—18. It is most apparent, that the Prophet meant no distinction at all, between *the Spirit of the Lord*, and *the Lord or God himself*. In short, the *Spirit of the Lord* means *here*, no other than the *Mind of the Lord*. The Apostle alluding to this very passage, certainly thought so.—Rom. xi, 34.

times drops all discrimination, and says, that *it was GOD who worked in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*—Philipp. ii, 13.

This Apostle, who (in Gal. iii, 20) asserts in direct terms that *God is One* (Gr. *εἷς*, *One Person*), and so pointedly distinguishes Him from *all that are called gods* (1 Cor. viii, 5, 6), could never intend to inculcate any *Plurality* in the Deity*. But if Men will still insist, from such figurative texts as have been produced, or referred to, that by the *Spirit* is meant a *distinct* Intelligent Being; they should observe, that they cannot from thence maintain his *Equality* with the Almighty, since, if we must take those passages *literally*; the Spirit is therein made a *subordinate* Agent, an *Advocate* or *Intercessor*; and even supposing

* Christ says (John iv, 24), that *God is a Spirit*; but we no where find him, in contradiction to this, declaring that *God* consists of *Three different Spirits*, or *Divine Persons*;—a Doctrine which must inevitably infuse into the human mind *Polytheistic Ideas*. That *God is one Person only*, and not *Three*, we may learn from the *Bible*, in the most express terms.—See Job xiii, 8; 1 Thes. iii, 11; Heb. i, 3.

this to be the Truth, our main Argument still remains unshaken*.

But it would be far more consistent with the *general* strain of the Scriptures, and infinitely more clear to the common apprehensions of Mankind, to consider the Holy Spirit as, in fact, implying the Deity himself, or his *own Spiritual manifestations*. And if it be true that *Speculative* Opinions add little or nothing to the general stock of real Knowledge, we shall reap but small profit in continuing to Labour under the dark shade of those mysterious Theories, which have so long served to bewilder and confound the Understandings of Men; and which evidently appear to clash with the Great and

* There are three or four Passages, which have been already pointed out in St. John (Note *, p. 76), that, if we deny the use of *figure* in them, are not easily understood without supposing the holy Spirit to be an *Inferior Agent*, sent by the Father; and even by Christ. Every one will determine for himself on this Point, which, we repeat, is not meant to be disputed here. But we think, however, that it would be extremely Difficult to reconcile the Opinion with *very many* passages in Scripture, and in St. John's own writings, as the Reader must perceive.—Compare John xiv. 16, 17, 26, with 1 John ii. 20, 27. See also Eph. iii. 7, 16; 2 Tim. i. 6, 7; Titus iii. 4—7; where, as in divers other places, the Spirit appears not to be considered as a *Person*, but rather as the *divine Grace* or *Power*.

Fundamental Article of our Holy Records. It is true, indeed, that such perplexing Subtilties will never have much weight with those who freely reflect upon them, and who are taught, by the endless Controversies they have occasioned, to believe that they have done more real and lasting Injury to the Christian Religion, than its most inveterate Enemies have ever been able to accomplish. Serious and thinking Men cannot help being persuaded, That the holding any Being whatsoever, in any possible sense, to be *Equal* with the FATHER, is, notwithstanding any qualifications that may be offered, a *dangerous, palpable, and direct Attack upon His Supremacy*; Whom, the Bible proclaims to be the *One God and Father of All*; *Who is Above All*; LORD of Heaven and Earth. And further, That the Doctrines contained in what is called the *Creed of St. Athanasius*, have conveyed down to us, through a more entangled Medium, the very Polytheism of the Heathen Platonists*; and, of course, have helped (how-

* It is well known that this observation appears but too justly founded. The *Platonists* asserted a *Trinity* in the most express terms: A powerful Intimation to Christians, whence the Doctrine had its Origin. "Porphry (explaining *Plato's* Opinion, as *Cyril* saith against *Julian*) puts *Three* essences in the Deity. 1. *God Almighty*. 2. *The Creator* [or the Son]. 3. *The Soul of the World*; nor is the Deity

ever unintentionally) to contaminate the First Principle of true Religion, and to Lessen, though they cannot destroy, the Effects of that gracious and directive Light which was communicated to Man *at the Beginning*, and uniformly strengthened by every subsequent Dispensation.

IT is evident, from the concurrent testimony of Scripture, that our blessed Redeemer himself, and his Apostles also, performed all their *Miracles* by the *Extraordinary* influence, and most mighty assistance of the *holy Spirit of God* *; or, which is the same, by the *Power of*

"extended any further." How little this differs from the present received System, the Reader will judge. And, accordingly, even unto this day, we see men are driven to the Doctrines of *Plato*, in their endeavours to explain and support their notions of a *Trinity*. The Pythagoreans and the Platonists appear to have been the first who taught the World to divide the Deity into *Parts*. The former, it seems, "had a religious regard for the number *Three*, in "which they placed *all Perfection*." — Vid. Vives Com. on St. Augustine's Civ. Dei, b. x, note on chap. xxiii and xxix.

* Isa. xi, 2; Matt. iii, 16; John iii, 34; Ibid. xi, 40—44; Ibid. xiv, 10; Acts i, 8; Ibid. viii, 13, 18, 19, 20; Ibid. x, 38; Ibid. xv, 12; Rom. xv, 19; Heb. ii, 4. The distinction is, that our Saviour *himself* was endued with these Gifts *without measure*, He *being full of the Holy Ghost* (Luke ii, 40; iv, 1), or the *power of God dwelling more fully* in him.

God himself acting with them *. And this seems to deserve particular attention, as many have been led to conclude from the stupendous Miracles of Christ, that he must certainly be *God*, and, of course, the Object of Supreme Worship; not distinguishing that those Miracles were wrought by a transcendent Power derived immediately from the Deity, and not from any *Innate* Power of Christ himself; as will be shewn from sacred Authority. Those who think that Miracles, and the Knowledge of future Events, are sufficient to command Religious Worship unto Them who have displayed such Powers, should consider that, in this case, not only Christ, but Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles also, would, in consequence, be all of them Objects of Divine Worship. Thus we should fall directly into the Error of the People of Lystra (Acts xiv, 8—18; an Error which, indeed, has not been peculiar to them). But by attending to the following testimonies, we shall be able to make the proper distinction.

In Luke v, 17, we find that while our Saviour, surrounded by the Pharisees and Doctors

* According to St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, it was by the same *Spirit* or *Power*, that Christ himself was raised from the Dead. — 1 Pet. iii, 18; Rom. viii, 11; compare with Eph. i, 19, 20.

of the Law, was teaching them and the People, it is added;—*and the Power of the Lord was present to heal them* *. But, in the citations, which follow, we see those wonderful works ascribed more immediately and *directly* to their *Principal*.

Thus on the miraculous healing of the sick of the palsy by *Christ* (Matt. ix, 8), *When the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God who had given such Power unto men*. In consequence of his raising the only Son of a Widow from the Dead (Luke vii, 16), *There came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great Prophet is risen up among us: and that God hath visited his people; i. e. visited them by His great Prophet; and by the signal Power which He communicated to that illustrious Representative*.—See John ix, 17, 33. Again: on the cure of a Child by the same Compassionate Delegate (Luke ix, 43), the *People were all amazed at the mighty power of God*. And when the blind Man received his sight near Jericho, *he followed Jesus, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it gave praise unto God*.—Ibid. xviii, 43. This appears to have been the general sense of all

* See Acts iv, 29, 30.

those who on the spot beheld these Miracles. *Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see : and they glorified the GOD of Israel.*—Matt. xv, 31 *.

* Our Saviour, on occasion of these Miracles, is sometimes said to have been *Worshipped*: at other times suplicants are said to have *fallen at his feet* (Mark v, 22; vii, 25), an eastern custom of shewing very great respect.—See 1 Kings xviii, 7. But it appears, from St. Matthew, and elsewhere, that the People clearly understood from *Whom* the Divine Power exerted amongst them was Derived: and, therefore, it is not likely, as may be judged from the quotations above, that *Divine* Worship was intended to Christ. The term *Worship* is *relative* (as others have observed), and doth not always imply *Divine* or *Supreme Worship*: It often, in the Bible, signifies a rendering of high *Respect, Honour, or Obeisance*. The following texts may suffice to shew this: 1 Chron. xxix, 20; Dan. ii, 46; Matt. xviii, 26; Luke xiv, 10; Acts x, 25. The instance in Daniel is very singular. Our sacred Volume, as well as universal custom, allows that *Glory* and *Honour* may be given, in a fit or proportionate Sense, to various Persons.—See Rom. ii, 10; xiii, 7.

The extreme joy which any one must have felt on being suddenly healed of an inveterate and painful Disease (or even in the well-grounded hopes of such a Miracle), would draw forth such ready testimonies of Confidence, Admiration, and Gratitude, as would appear little short of Adoration.—See 2 Kings iv, 22—37. And who can be surprised at this? Our Lord, who well knew the human heart, was

The attributing these Miracles ultimately to the *Almighty*, was a construction not confined to the Crouds that frequently surrounded our Lord merely from curiosity. St. Luke informs us (xix, 37), that, on the remarkable Occasion when our Saviour, followed by a vast concourse of the People, made his Triumphant entry into Jerusalem; it was then that his numerous *Proselytes* united in giving an open and a glorious testimony of *their* conviction from *Whom* all those instances of Divine Power had proceeded. For, *at the descent of the mount of Olives*, on their approach to the City, inspirited

unwilling to condemn these natural and almost unavoidable Effusions, when offered to him on such glorious occasions, although they might be somewhat improperly expressed. He, however, was very far from concealing the proper Author of these supernatural Manifestations, given in proof of his Authority.

We read (Luke xxiv, 52), that, at the *Ascension* of Christ, his disciples *Worshipped* him. It immediately follows, that, "they returned to Jerusalem with great joy; *And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.*" Hence it appears, that the Worship, Reverence, or Homage rendered to Christ, was temporary, and occasioned by the wonderful Event of which his disciples were Eye-witnesses. But we do not find that *Religious Adoration* was offered by them to *Christ* in the Temple. Indeed, it is improbable that any pious men, of Jewish origin, should acknowledge any more than *one* Object of *Divine* Worship.

by the Presence of their Great Master, *The whole multitude of the Disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen**. Now that they were not mistaken in thus referring these mighty acts to the *Deity*, and not to any other Being; Christ himself, and the Apostles also, have fully confirmed.

Go, saith our Saviour to the man of the country of the Gadarenes, whom he had healed, *return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee.*—Luke viii, 39. On a similar occasion, he marks with distinguished approbation the piety, and grateful exultation of the Leper, who, for the mercy he had just received, *with a loud voice glorified God*; and, with great humility, thanked the blessed Instrument of His goodness.—Luke xvii, 11—19.

*. See also Luke v, 25, 26; xiii, 13. Note.—Whenever the term *God* is mentioned *absolutely*, it always, in Scripture, means *the Father*; as is plain from the explanatory passages, Mark iii, 35; compare Matt. xii, 50; John viii, 41, 42, 54; 2 Cor. i, 3; xi, 31; Eph. iv, 6; 1 Thess. iii, 13; James iii, 9, &c. The *LORD God* of the Old Testament, is very often called by the more indulgent name of *the Father*, in the New. The last appellation is, however, very ancient.—See Isa. lxiv, 8.

We may observe that our Lord is solicitous and watchful to lead the Attention of his Disciples from these surprising *Effects*, up to the true *Cause* of them. At the sight of the *withered Fig-tree* * (Mark xi, 20, 21), St. Peter expressing his astonishment, our Redeemer takes the opportunity of exhorting his Disciples to have confidence in that Almighty Being, by a firm faith in *Whom* they should accomplish things far more wonderful:—*Have faith*, says he, *in God*. On that affecting occasion, when he was about to raise his beloved Lazarus from the Grave (John xi), he, in a short but significant Address, openly offers up his acknowledgments to that *Supreme Power* which enabled him to call the Dead again into Life! and to confirm, by that illustrious testimony, the Truth of his Divine Embassage. *Lifting up his eyes*, he saith, *Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* The whole relation of this benevolent Miracle is solemn and pathetic in the highest degree: and the Thanksgiving preferred to God

* This Miracle was, very probably, done as a type, or emblem, of the Curse that should befall the Jewish Nation for their obstinate unbelief and *Unfruitfulness*.—See Bishop Law's *Considerations*, note *, p. 321.

at the moment before Lazarus was called forth, shews the earnest desire our Saviour had of manifesting, not his own glory, but the *Glory of God* (ver. 40). Indeed, our Lord in his declarations that *he could do nothing of himself*, sufficiently evinced that he never thought of arrogating to *himself* the power of working these Miracles; or of ascribing them to any other Being, or Person, than their proper Author, the FATHER, *Who*, he repeatedly asserts, *dwelt in him and did the works* *.

With the same view, St. Peter informs us (Acts x, 38), *How GOD anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for GOD was with him.*

Our Saviour continually represents himself as acting under the Guidance and Authority of *the Father*. He refers to *the Father* alone as his *Sanctifier*, and the sacred *Witness* of his divine Mission†; making no separate appeal to the

* John xiv, 10. *The Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works*; "i. e. not the Person, but the Divine Power of the Father, dwelleth in Christ."—Dr. Clarke.

† John v, 31, 32, 37; vi, 27; viii, 18; x, 36, 37.

holy Spirit. He declares *the Father* alone to be Omniscient and Omnipotent*. He asserts *the Father* to be the immediate *Revealer* of the most important Truths†; and the *Dispenser of good things* (Matt. vii, 11), by which are here meant *spiritual endowments*‡. He tells his disciples that it was the Spirit of *the Father* that spake, or should speak in them§, and, consequently, in *no* instance directs any Acknowledgments to be made *distinctly* to the holy Spirit. Are not these circumstances utterly unaccountable on the supposition that the holy Ghost is a Divine Person, EQUAL to the *Father*, and *Different* from Him?

St. Peter immediately after that gracious effusion of supernatural Powers from above (Acts ii), takes occasion to proclaim unto the astonished Multitude, the origin of them all. *THIS is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel* (Joel ii, 28, 29): *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of MY Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters*

* Matt. xxiv, 36; Mark xiii, 32; xiv, 36.

† Matt. xi, 25, 26; xvi, 16, 17.

‡ See the parallel passage, Luke xi, 13.

§ Matt. x, 20.

shall prophecy.—And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit: and they shall prophecy. Again (ver. 22): *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which GOD DID BY HIM in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.* To the same purpose are the following declarations (Acts xv, 12): *Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders GOD had wrought among the Gentiles by them.* Again (Ibid. xix, 11): *And GOD wrought special Miracles by the hands of Paul.*

What sufficient authority, therefore, from the sacred Writings, or from reason, there is to distinguish the Holy Spirit into a *third Person*, we cannot find or comprehend*: surely by *this dis-*

* The following Texts having been often produced, and thought by many to be clearly favourable to the *Trinitarian System*; we shall, therefore, endeavour to give, what we apprehend to be, a proper explication of them.

Matt. xxviii, 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost.*

The purport of this Form of Baptism we take to be this, viz. *The entering into a solemn Obligation to obey the Doctrines*

unction we do not heighten our conceptions of

and Precepts of the Gospel: which, we are sincerely to believe, were communicated to Christ, for the universal benefit of Mankind, by God, even the FATHER, and confirmed by the Miraculous attestations of His sacred Power or Spirit. It appears, however, from the Acts, and from St. Paul's Epistles, that the Apostles did not think it necessary to follow the above Form in Baptizing their Converts, but, most frequently, if not always, Baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ only: i. e. Initiated them into the Religion which Christ taught. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ (Gal. iii, 27), viz. put him on as an Example; acknowledged him as a divine Guide and Master. Now this more concise mode of Baptism, if the above explication be allowed, amounts to the same as that recorded in St. Matthew, comprising all that is meant by Baptizing in the name of the Father, &c. Whereas if more had been intended by the words in St. Matthew, it is hardly conceivable that the Apostles would have ever ventured to omit any part of that Form on so Interesting and Instructive an Occasion.—See an ancient explanation of this passage by Hilary.

2 Cor. xiii, 14. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.*

This passage contains a pious wish of the Apostle, that, the Grace, or *Favour* (*χάρις*) of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Medium of the Divine Assistance (or, by *Grace*, may mean the like *Mind*, or *Disposition*, *which was also in Christ Jesus*); and the love of God, which is the foundation of every Blessing, might be with the Corinthians; and also that they might be *Partakers* of the holy Spirit. “The text

the glory, benevolence, or power of the *Almighty*

“ includes a compendious wish of all the Blessings of the “ Gospel.”

1 John v, 7. *For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

This famous passage, which is supposed directly to imply a Trinity, is of *very* doubtful authority. Many of the most Learned Christian Advocates have maintained it to be absolutely *spurious*. Among other strong reasons against it (one of which is, that the *Spirit*, ver. 7, 8, is reckoned as *two* witnesses, to make up the *six*), they assert that it is not to be found in *any authentic* Greek Manuscript whatsoever: “ *in none Elder than the invention of Printing.*” Should it, however, be genuine (which is difficult to believe unless it were better grounded) it only infers, as the context shews, that, the Almighty Father himself (Matt. iii, 17; 2 Pet. i, 17)—the purity and superior excellence of the Word or Christian Doctrines; and the holy Spirit or divine Powers, communicated by the Father in the fullest manner to Christ;—all bear witness with united force, that, *he is the Son of God*:—which no Christian will deny.

But let us take the *uncontroverted* words of St. John, and the construction will be easy. In the Cambridge Gr. *MS.* (as in *all* other Ancient *MSS.*) the present 7th verse *is not to be found*. The genuine passage (which should properly make the 7th verse, and has an immediate and natural connexion with the 6th) runs thus, the words, *in earth*, being also omitted in the *MS.* *For there are three that bear witness; the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree*

himself; but rather, most ungratefully, would transfer them in part to *another* *.

So far were our Lord and his immediate disciples from giving birth to a doctrine so injurious and complex, that they seem to have taken pains

in one, i. e. in one Testimony, *that Christ is the Son of God*, the true *Messiah*. The passage has been thus explained. The *Spirit* denotes the mighty Works which our Lord (and his Apostles) wrought by the Spirit of Power: The *Water* alludes to his *Baptism*, when a voice from heaven announced his glorious Title (Matt. iii, 17): The *Blood* refers to his Death in the great Cause for which he appeared on earth. And these striking events, together with his *Resurrection*, being recorded in the Gospel, may be properly said to bear witness, even to all succeeding generations, that he is the beloved *Son of God*:—*by whom* (ver. 11) God hath promised to faithful Christians *eternal life*.

Much the same meaning has been given to these texts by others; and some such explication must be allowed them, or they cannot be reconciled to the general sense of Scripture: And we are told by the Compilers of the 39 Articles, that “we may not so expound one place in Scripture that “it be repugnant to another.” The construction which is here put upon the above texts will hardly be thought *forced*.

* To what is called a *Third Person*. Yet it certainly is not ungratefully *meant*; it is the love of God *misplaced*; and must often serve to keep our Heavenly Father at a distance, as it were, from our attention, by introducing into the mind (what is supposed to be) *another* Object of Adoration.

to shew us that there is no foundation for such a *personal distinction* (as the Reader must have observed in the texts already cited or referred to). They uniformly teach us that *all Power* proceedeth from God *alone**: and our Redeemer testifies that, by the *Holy Spirit* is signified, not Power *only*, but also that *Divine Light* (than which there cannot be a greater *Comforter*), the *promise of God*†, which guideth us into all Truth, and which our heavenly FATHER giveth to them that ask him in sincerity.—Luke xi, 13.

In agreement with this declaration of our Lord, there are numberless texts in the Bible, which authorize us to think, that *the Father Himself*, or *His Influence*, and no other, is directly alluded to, whenever the *Spirit* of the Father, or the *holy Spirit* is mentioned. For example (Matt. x, 20), *For it is not ye that*

* *My Father is greater than all.*—John x, 29. *I can of mine own self do nothing.*—Ibid. v, 30. *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works.*—Ibid. xiv, 10. (Here, it is very observable, our Saviour plainly considers the Father and the Holy Spirit as the same). *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast Given me are of thee* (the Father).—Ibid. xvii, 7. *For there is no power but of God.*—Rom. xiii, 1; see also John v, 44.

† Acts i, 4, 5; Luke xxiv, 49; Eph. i, 13.

speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. The corresponding passage, in Mark xiii, 11, runs thus: *For it is not ye that speak, but the holy Ghost.* Here the *holy Ghost*, and the *Spirit of the Father*, have the same meaning.

What know ye not, saith St. Paul to the Corinthians, that your body is the temple of the holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?—1 Cor. vi, 19.

Or, *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?—1 Cor. iii, 16.*

These two passages (as well as the preceding) evidently and clearly explain each other: the temple of the *holy Ghost*, we see, is the temple of God, or of *His* Spirit, which must signify the *very same*, with respect to the *Agent*, according to the reasoning of St. Paul elsewhere (1 Cor. ii, 10, 11); and he manifestly intended no *difference* here. The only Distinction, that seems necessary to be remembered, is this, that the term *holy Spirit* sometimes refers directly to the *Father*, but more frequently, and almost universally, implies *His* spiritual *Communications*, or miraculous *Gifts*, of which the primi-

tive Christians were made *Partakers* * (Heb. vi, 4); and this proper Distinction must be made as circumstances point out.

A modern Writer† whose Opinions, in general, deserve a most respectful Attention, has confessed, that “in *very many* places of Scripture, the Holy Ghost is mentioned in *such* a Manner, as that it does not at all appear in *those* Passages, whether a *Person* be intended, or only a *Power*.” The same great Writer, however, elsewhere observes (considering, as he generally does, the Holy Spirit as a *Person distinct* from the *Father*), that “the Holy Ghost is represented as the *Author* and *Worker* of all *Miracles*, even of those done by our Lord himself; and as the *Conductor* of *Christ* himself, in the principal Actions of his Life here upon Earth.” But, as to *this* Notion, it should be Remembered, that our Lord himself

* The passage in Heb. iii, 14, where Christians are said to be *made partakers of Christ*; is explained (ver. 1), to mean, *Partakers of the heavenly Calling* (i. e. of *Christianity*); or (Ephes. iii, 2, 6), *Fellow-heirs of the Dispensation of the grace of God*;—*Partakers of His Promise in* (or, through) *Christ, by the Gospel*.

† Dr. Samuel Clarke; see his Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 151.

declares, on the contrary, that it was *the FATHER who dwelled in him, that did the Works*.—John xiv, 10. That *he did nothing of himself; but as the FATHER had taught him*.—John viii, 28. Our Saviour refers not to any Assistant (as has been observed) *distinct from the Father*. An explanatory passage of St. Paul, perfectly harmonizes with the assertions of our Lord; *to wit, that GOD was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself!*—2 Cor. v, 18, 19. That is, God did all Things requisite to the Gospel Dispensation, by the Instrumentality of *His Spirit or Power*, communicated to His beloved *Son* in the most Excelling Degree;—and to others in an inferior Manner, and in very different Proportions.

Still we want not further confirmations of this important Truth. The same enlightened Writer (in 1 Cor. xiv, 18, and also in his 2d Epistle to Timothy iii, 16) declares again (thank God in words which cannot justly admit of doubt), *Who* is ultimately meant by the *holy Spirit*:—under *Whose* sacred *influence and direction*, he, and the rest of the Apostles, had been *Acting and Writing*; and to *Whom* their gratitude was due;—in the following clear and remarkable expressions:—In the first passage, after treating of

Spiritual Gifts, he says, *I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all*. In the second, he asserts that, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*. *Who*, it is declared in another place, did distribute all those wonderful endowments, and spiritual blessings, *according to his OWN Will:—God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts (or distributions) of the holy Ghost, according to HIS OWN WILL.—Heb. ii, 4 **. By the term *God* is here meant *the Father*, this is evident, the holy Ghost being afterwards noted (amongst other Divine favours) in the same sentence. We may, therefore, observe that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this passage to the *Athanasian* system. It doth not appear reasonable to think, that the holy Ghost (although a Being or Divine Person, *different* from the Father, and *Equal* with Him, yet) should not be determined by *his own Will*, or Authority, in the distribution of those very Gifts, which the above System supposes to be *peculiarly* his own: But, waving an argument which possibly may be controverted:—

* Compare Ephesians i, 11; see also 1 Cor. xii, 11, which compare with *ibid.* ver. 28.

That which (on the Trinitarian hypothesis) constitutes a still greater Difficulty in the text under consideration, and also in several others, and which, indeed, appears insuperable, is this, that **GOD** is therein positively declared to be the **GIVER**, and the *holy Spirit* the **GIFT**, or *Power** communicated to many, of Healing, of speaking several Languages, of Prophesying, &c. Now it is very readily understood, that the Almighty is able to dispense as He pleases, such invaluable *Donations* to His creatures; but it seems impossible to conceive how a Divine *Person*, or *Intelligent Agent*, can be said, with any consistency, to be *poured out*, *shed*, or *Distributed*. How incongruous and offensive it would be, to suppose that *the Father* (and not his divine *Gifts*), could *Himself* be *poured out* upon any one, or *Distributed* to many!

Thus, we are humbly of opinion, it appears in the strongest light, from the sacred testimonies adduced, that the gifts or powers, therein called the gifts of the holy Ghost, were the

* "That which is called *the Demonstration of the SPIRIT* "and of *Power* (1 Cor. ii, 4), is in the next verse called, "*the Power of God*."—Dr. S. Clarke, Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 9.

Spiritual Dispensations of GOD *himself* (Acts viii, 20; xi, 15—17), from *Whom* they all *originally* flowed, and not from any *other* Being whatsoever. If, therefore, we consider those supernatural Endowments *abstractedly* from the Deity; we must then, in order to preserve the consistency of the Scriptures, and a rational Faith, resolve them into the effects of a *Divine Afflatus*, or *Celestial Virtue**, exerted in different modes and degrees, and imparted to different Agents, but still issuing *primarily* from *One* and the *Same* Great Fountain of All Blessings, even from *the* FATHER.—Our heavenly Teacher and his Disciples, were well aware that the true *Unity* of the Deity could be preserved by no other Doctrine†.

Do not err, therefore, my beloved Brethren. Every good gift and Every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the FATHER of lights ‡, Who, as St. Paul comprehensively ex-

* Luke vi, 19; viii, 46; 1 John ii, 20, 27.

† Therefore the Apostles have been careful to *repeat* to us, that *He* who *Anointed* Jesus and themselves *with the holy Ghost* and with power, *is God*.—Acts iv, 27; x, 38; 2 Cor. i, 21, 22; 2 Pet. i, 17; Jude i, 1.

‡ James i, 16, 17. These words of St. James (which agree

presses himself, *is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Amen.

with those of *Christ*, Matt. vii, 11; Luke xi, 13) appear to be sufficiently decisive, and to confirm the Principles contained above: since it is plain that, if *every* good and *every* perfect gift cometh from the FATHER; *no* good or perfect gift whatsoever, can *originate* from any *other* Being. To *Whom*, therefore, are our highest Praise and Gratitude due?

OF OUR
SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

He shall stand and rule in the strength of the LORD, in the Majesty of the Name of the LORD his God; and they shall be converted: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.*—Micah v, 4.

Behold, my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him; and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.—Matt. xii, 18; see Isa. xlii, 1—9.

THE UNITY of the Most High God, is a **TRUTH** which, by his watchful Providence, has been preserved, *in many*, from the days of Adam, through all the dark and complicated systems of Religion, unto this clouded hour: it never has

* It should have been thus rendered, according to Bishop Chandler; “for they (i. e. Jews as well as Gentiles) shall be “*Converted;*” (not, they shall abide) and then *he*, the Christ, *shall be great*, &c. As the passage stands in our English version, the meaning is not clear.—See the Bishop’s *Defence of Christianity*, p. 131, and Matt. xviii, 3.

been totally lost sight of, nor ever will be. Its permanent duration is, alone, a presumptive proof that it is a *Truth*.

The violent Contentions relating to the Nature of our Redeemer, which have thrown the Christian World, for so long a period, into the most unhappy divisions, in all appearance, arose principally (as hath been noticed) from a very early admission of the Eastern Philosophy amongst Christians. The simplicity that reigns throughout the Gospel, was ill exchanged for those dark and delusive tenets which have introduced an almost total confusion into its Doctrines. The proper and necessary Distinction between the Invisible God and His Messenger, is, in a great measure, lost: How just and advantageous it would be to recover it in the minds of men, it is hoped, will be sufficiently shewn in the following pages. Happy it is that the undertaking is not difficult; since the authentic documents of our Religion have been Providentially transmitted to the present age, and the main points of the Gospel are comprised in so short and easy a Revelation.

This is life eternal, that they might know Thee (O Father), the ONLY true God; and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.—John xvii, 3.

He who brought life and immortality fully to light, was sent by the Supreme Being to confirm also that Great and Essential Article, *His Unity*; as it had been before taught by the Prophets in the Old Testament*; and to instil into mankind the purest Religious Principles, the most benevolent Ethics, that ever were promulgated on Earth.—No one, who truly practises them, can remain unconvinced of their surpassing excellence, and divine origin. *To know Jesus Christ*, is to know and Acknowledge him to be the Messiah, and (by God's appointment) the Saviour of the World:—to love his Memory, to obey his Precepts, and to believe and reverence his *Doctrines*, as the best gift of heaven. The sacred and Willing Messenger, in his own person, exemplified a perfect and immoveable adherence to them, and calmly resigned his Life as a solemn Testimony of their truth and efficacy†. From the dignity of his Mission, the force of his Instructions, his unexampled Inno-

* See Matt. v, 17 (the *Moral Law* is meant); Rom. xv, 8, 9.

† In what Sense this great Event may be said to be a *Propitiatory*, or an *Atoning Sacrifice* (when we consider the tender Mercy, and the Natural Placability of our *Heavenly Father*, whose Divine Justice is often declared to be appeased by *Repentance* and *Amendment* (Isa. lv, 7; Ezek. xviii;

gency, and the Power with which he was Invested, he is called in Scripture the *Son of God*:

Luke xiii, 2—5), we are unable to determine*. The *Primary Cause* of Redemption by Christ, was, *the Love of God to Mankind* (John iii, 16, 17), and the *Means* of our Redemption, Such as *He* was Pleased to Appoint. Therefore, in whatever Light we may consider the *Death* of Christ, and whatsoever are the Benefits arising to us from it; All the *Consequences* of his *Mission, Death, &c.*, must be ultimately referred to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, the *Father of all Mercies*.—Gal. i, 4. And this may, and should be done, without in the least Detracting from the *proper Honour* and Gratitude due to *Christ*, for his patient Assiduity in *Promulgating*, and his Exemplary Resignation in *Finishing* the glorious Commission.

According to the New Testament, *Through Christ alone*, as the *Means* or *Instrument*, God has been Pleased to grant Remission of past Sin: But not *Unconditionally*. By a *faithful OBSERVANCE of the Doctrines of Christ*, in which *Repentance*, and the *Moral Virtues*, are eminently Included; we are *reconciled* unto God (i. e. to His righteous Government), and have a way opened to Eternal Life. The Notion, which some have adopted, that the shedding of the precious Blood of our Lord (a Fact which, from its circumstances, strongly Illustrated his meritorious Obedience to the Will of God, and his excessive love of Mankind), was *alone a complete and sufficient Satisfaction for ever, for the Sins of All*;—a *Satisfaction* in such a Sense as supposes that the *Death of Christ* has entirely destroyed the *Effects of Sin*, or

* See Bishop *Law's* excellent *Considerations* on the Theory of Religion, note π, p. 281, fifth edit.

A denomination further justified by his *super-natural Conception*. His Precepts are clear,

made It no longer *Imputable* to Christians;—*This* must certainly be Erroneous:—" *Forgiveness* through Christ, is obtained, not at all for those who *continue* in Sin, but for those only who *forsake* it*." Besides, if the Notion above were true, there could be no need, now, of his *Intercession*; the Divine Rule; that every Man shall finally be Judged according to his deeds, would be Nugatory; and the Injunction unnecessary, which teaches us to endeavour to work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling.—Philipp. ii, 12.

In *This* most arduous Undertaking, the working out our own Salvation, we cannot be said to want Assistance, while we have the Gospel open unto us, and while the Grace of God, by various means, Co-operates with it. But, indeed, the Offices to which Christ has been raised, also afford us ground to hope for every Advantage that can reasonably be expected. He is properly called *The Mediator*; because he, by the Command of God (Who anciently appointed *Moses* to a similar but Inferior Charge), Transacted the great Business of the *New Covenant* between God and Man, and thus became, by the Will of his Father (1 John iv, 14), the Anointed Saviour of the World. Our Lord is Ordained *Head of the Church*; having (under God) an Exclusive Authority over it; and by his *Intercession*, we may without presumption suppose, that the great Antidote to sin, the heavenly Light of the Gospel increases, and will Increase amongst us. He may at all times be considered as the *Representative* of the *Christian World*, in the Presence of God (Heb. ix, 24), and we

* Dr. Samuel Clarke.

solid, and comprehensive ; teaching us, as the first and great Principles (on the firm foundations of which, every Religious and moral Perfection is raised), *To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our Mind ; to Worship Him alone in Spirit and in Truth* * : and, *to do unto all Men as we would they should do unto ourselves*. In proportion to

may naturally conclude, that our Deliverer possesses a warm Affection for his sincere Followers, and an undiminished desire to assist them. He is Constituted (doubtless for wise and gracious Purposes), our only *Advocate* and *High Priest* (for which kind Offices, as well as That of being our *future Judge*, our Saviour is peculiarly Qualified, Heb. iv, 15, 16) ; Through whom we are instructed to Address, with more confidence, the Supreme Being. By solemnly avowing our Lord in these Characters, we render him the proper Honours ; Obey the Ordinances of God ; and thereby enjoy the great Benefits of Christ's *Ministration*, whatever That may comprise.—See Rom. viii, 34 ; Heb. vii, 25 ; 1 John ii, 1. These seem to be the true Motives why he, with great Benevolence, has repeatedly ordered us to make use of his *Name*, in our Petitions to God ;—which is a direct *Acknowledgment* of Christ as our *Head* and *Intercessor*, and a sure Mode of continually preserving his Memory, *as Such*, in the Minds of his Disciples : *That God, in all things, may be glorified through Jesus Christ*.—1 Pet. iv, 11.

* Matt. iv, 10 ; Ibid. vi, 6 ; Mark xii, 30 ; John iv, 23, 24 : see also Rev. xiv, 6, 7 ; Ibid. xix, 10. But his *own Example* is abundantly sufficient : see Matt. xi, 25 ; Luke v, 16 ; Ibid. vi, 12 ; Ibid. xxii, 41, 42, &c.

our *Observance* of these Principles, the great Hope of future happiness strengthens and increases in us ; we feel our kindness towards our fellow creatures quickened ; and our noblest powers are exerted, as they should be, in testimonies of peculiar love and duty to our benevolent Creator.

Ever attentive to the Great Author of his Mission, and careful to prevent any misconception of his own Character, which his astonishing Powers might have occasioned, our Saviour “ refers all *his works*, all *his words*, to “ the honour of *the Father*. He did not preach “ *Another God*, than He who had been taught “ in the Old Testament *.” If he had, the Jews would, indeed, have been justified, according to an express Command delivered by Moses (Deut. xiii, 1—5 ; xviii, 20), in treating him as a false Prophet. But though he sometimes clothed his meaning in apt†, or beautiful simi-

* Bishop *Chandler’s* defence of Christianity from the Prophecies, second edit., p. 318.

† See Matt. xxi, 33—39. A prophetic Parable ! It has been remarked (by *Benson*) “ that he never spoke in Parables at all, till the Jews had manifested such a wicked “ and perverse spirit, as to ascribe his miracles to a confederacy with *Beelzebub*.” — Bishop *Law’s* Consid., note, p. 324, fifth edit.

litudes, and sometimes in lofty expressions, yet he did not conceal the subordinacy of his Character. His declarations were frequently without *figure*. With a manifest design to point the distinction between himself and God, in Whose high service he was employed; he tells the Jews, who were often maliciously watching an opportunity to fix a charge of blasphemy upon him; *I seek not MINE OWN glory: there is One that seeketh and Judgeth.—If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your GOD.—John viii, 50, 54. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him*.—*

* Can any one read these words, and yet believe that Jesus preached *himself*? as the Jews even now assert; and, therefore, contend that he could not be a true Prophet.—See Letters of *David Levi* to Dr. Priestly, 1787, p. 21, &c. St. Paul is directed by *our Saviour*, after his Resurrection, *to turn men from the power of Satan* (or power of Sin) *unto God*; not unto *himself*.—Acts xxvi, 13—20. A multitude of passages might be produced (many of which, indeed, appear in this work) in which, Christ formally declares, that he received his Commission and Powers, *from God*; Whom he preached (and *not himself*) with as fervent Zeal as did Moses—the acknowledged type of Christ. When the Apostles are said, in the phraseology of Scripture, to *preach Christ*, no more is meant than that they preached the

John vii, 18. How very far was this from any appearance of claiming divine honours from men! It was not *his own* glory, but the glory of God, that our faithful Redeemer sought. In a more retired scene, he checks his mistaken disciples, who discovered some Ambitious pretensions; by representing to them, the true nature, and (notwithstanding its momentous consequences) the humility of his office. *For even the son of man, he says, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*—Mark x, 45*.

doctrine which Christ had taught (in this sense, Moses is said to be *preached*, Acts xv, 21); and also declared him to be the Son of God, the Messiah, or Christ, all which Titles, the Jews know well enough, have the same signification.

* His not entering upon his gracious Office until he was about thirty years of age (Luke iii, 23) was in condescension, it should seem, to the law of Moses.—See Numb. iv, 3, 47, and Bishop Law's *Considerations*, note †, p. 278, fifth edit. It is very probable, that the greater part of the time, between the Infancy of Christ and his accession to his Ministry (in which period [Luke ii, 40, 52] *he increased in wisdom, and in favour with God and men*), was spent by him in a close study of the ancient Scriptures, and in discovering the Traditionary Corruptions of the Jews; which he afterwards so well exposed. That he was a perfect Master of the sacred writings of the Old Testament is evident, from the frequent citations he made thence; and his just appli-

His desire to preserve the deference due to the LORD of Heaven and Earth, is most conspicuous throughout his Ministry. In the *especial Prayer* that he composed for his Disciples, he teaches them to address themselves to *God, the Father, only : Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, &c.*—Matt. vi, 9—13. In this Divine Form, calculated for general benefit and observance, and which, therefore, assuredly is not *defective* in the main Point ; we find not the most distant hint of a *Trinity* ;—no other Object of Worship or Glorification proposed but *the FATHER*. Now, was there the least necessity to Pray *To* any other Being or Person *whatsoever*, our Saviour certainly would not have misled his disciples and the world, by *neglecting*, on that important and most interesting occasion, to mention, in his *Form of Prayer*, the proper *Objects* to be Addressed, if there were *any other* besides *the Father* ; since the Honours Respectively due to *Them* on such occasions, would *ever* be absolutely necessary to *true Religion*, and conducive to the happiness and prosperity of his followers. This single argument for the *Positive Unity* of

cations of the Prophecies which particularly concerned himself ; and of others which related to both Jews and Gentiles.

the Supreme Governor, and His *Prerogative*, appears so unexceptionable and decisive, that, surely, any contrary opinion must maintain its ground, merely from our perusing the sacred writings with inattention or prejudice.

To produce a fair unperverted Explication of the *Lord's Prayer* on the usual *Trinitarian Principles*, appears to be absolutely *Impossible*; and yet, so far as we know, it was the *only* model, or form of Prayer that our Lord ever taught.

Certain it is, that we should always be most ready to profess sincerely, in the Presence of God, that we are Christ's disciples, and rejoice greatly in this happy relation. Accordingly, we are instructed in many places of Scripture, to pray to the Deity *in our Saviour's Name*; he being our *High Priest, Intercessor*, and Guide or *Teacher*, the *Christ of God*; but, we humbly conceive, not *To* him (as the *Giver* of what we ask), who *himself* always Prayed, and gave thanks to the Almighty, and thereby plainly distinguished himself from the glorious God of All!

This point, relating to the true *Object* of Devotion, being of very extensive Consequence,

we shall pursue it further. As PRAYER is so clearly and expressly commanded, by Christ, to be offered to God, *the Father*, the natural Grantor of our petitions (Matt. xviii, 19), in perfect Agreement with the Divine Ordinances of the Old Testament ; If Prayer to Christ, also, had been a necessary Practice in the Religion of his disciples, or followers, it is with submission concluded, that we should have had the most distinct and repeated Directions from *him*, and his *Apostles*, in that respect. The weighty Consequences of such an Institution, it is presumed, would have required this : Inasmuch as a *new Object* of Devotion would have been introduced to both Jews and Gentiles. Before our Lord left the world, he would, most probably, have dictated some explicit form of Prayer to *himself*; and acquainted his disciples on what occasions it would be proper, or needful, to make use of it. But the Form he gave, we find, is addressed to *the Father only*. At the close of his Ministry, he indeed was pleased to give some further instructions, which were particularly enforced by St. Paul, and these will be noticed hereafter, as they require our serious attention *.

We shall observe now, that the Apostolical

* See p. 202, 203.

salutations at the head of St. Paul's Epistles, appear to be merely *Salutations*, addressed to Christians, and *not Prayers*. And it is remarkable that, immediately after those Salutations, the Apostle proceeds to Bless, to Glorify, or offer Thanksgiving, or Prayer *to God*, and *not to Christ*: as for example: Rom. i, 7, 8, 9, 10; Eph. i, 2, 3; Col. i, 2, 3, 12; and so generally with the other Epistles. Grace, mercy, and peace, are wished, or desired from God, *the Father*, and also from *Jesus Christ**, as the *Intercessor*, Through whom those blessings are obtained; but nevertheless, the Thanksgivings and Prayers, it appears, are in general offered

* It appears highly reasonable that the *Apostles*, and first *Converts*, should desire and expect some signal Assistance from or through *Christ*; who had actually *Appeared* to Them on several Occasions, after his *Resurrection* and *Ascension*, and Attended Them in a very *Especial Manner* during the Time of the rising Church; and, indeed, had promised the Apostles to be *alway with them to the End of the Age* (Matt. xxviii, 20); i. e. as many Learned Men have supposed, *to the End of the Apostolic Age*.

It is very Observable, that these Spiritual Blessings are never wished or desired *From the Holy Ghost*; nor is the *Holy Spirit* even mentioned with *God, the Father*, and our *Lord Jesus Christ*, in these benedictory Salutations. If, however, by the *Holy Spirit* we may understand the gracious *Gifts*, or the *holy Influence* of *God Himself*, the seeming Omission is then at once Accounted for.

to God, *the Father*; as, again, in 1 Cor. i, 4; 2 Cor. i, 3, 4; Gal. i, 4, 5; Philipp. i, 3, 4; 1 Thess. i, 2; 2 Thess. i, 3; 2 Tim. i, 3; Philemon iii, 4. And in the Acts of the Apostles we have several other instances.—See xii, 5; xxvii, 35; xxviii, 15, &c.

Let us, for argument, suppose (whether we have any clear Authority for it or not), that Christ, as the general *Intercessor*, has the comprehensive Power imparted to him, of knowing, or being conscious to all Prayers preferred by Christians*;—this may be very possible, yet it

* Under this Idea, some have thought it not improper to *Pray* to the Lord Jesus, as our *Intercessor*, to pray to God for us. But (without venturing hastily to condemn an Opinion, which arises from Piety), the main question is this; Have we sufficient Authority from any Undoubted Texts to address ourselves at all *in PRAYER directly to Christ*? *Search the Scriptures*. It must be perceived, that our Saviour's own plain Directions, pointed out above, do not seem to countenance such a Practice. We are not Instructed *in Scripture* to Pray to him for his *Intercession*. Notwithstanding this, all his faithful Followers may rest assured, that He will amply and readily do his Part, *Every* necessary Part; and it is ours, with hearts impressed with Gratitude, to follow Implicitly *his Instructions* and *Example*;—which evidently *Appropriate* the Duty of PRAYER *to the Father*. And (let it be well observed) *Whenever* we Pray *to the Father*, in the *Name of Christ*, we, by so doing, not only acknowledge ourselves to be his Disciples, but also solemnly *testify our*

is manifest, beyond contradiction, that he has not enjoined us to *Pray to himself*: From that sacred regard, it should seem, that he would have preserved inviolate to his Adorable Father. But it is to be hoped and believed, that although, in consequence of the commands of Christ (John xv, 16 ; xvi, 23), we do not address ourselves directly to him, yet he will certainly *Intercede*, so far as it may be proper*, for all who obey his Doctrines, and Pray in his Name *to God*. The very nature of our Saviour's Instructions promises this: and we find that the greater number of the ancient Collects, &c., in our Church Liturgy, were, very justly, formed on this Principle: Wherever they militate against it, by changing the *Intercessor* into the *Object*

Dependence upon him for his Intercession (which we all certainly desire), so far as it may be Necessary or Proper.

It has been already suggested (note †, p. 107), that the Principal subject of Christ's Intercession (as *Head of the Church*), or Entreaty with God, may very probably be, that *a True Knowledge of*, and a steady *Faith in the Gospel*, may increase among Mankind (since a firm Faith therein, leads to the *Practice* of all the Christian Duties); or, that *we be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel*.—Col. i, 23. The great anxiety that our Lord manifested on this point, while on Earth, seems to justify the Supposition.—See Luke xxii, 32; John xvii, 15, 17.

* See John xvi, 26, 27.

of Prayer, they stand in Repugnance to each other.

That Christ was not considered as a proper Object of *Prayer*, in the early times of Christianity, appears from the accounts preserved to us. But if he had *then* been thought to be *the true God*, or *Equal* to the *true God*, it is certain that, Petitions to him would have been very naturally and warmly recommended. This has been observed lately by a very distinguished Author, from whom we extract the subsequent quotation.

Origen, one of the most respectable of the ancient Christian writers, who flourished about the year 230, has left the following testimony of his opinion, and that of the more intelligent Christians of his time, respecting PRAYER.

“ If we know,” says he, “ what Prayer is,
 “ we must not pray to any created being, not
 “ to Christ himself, but only to God, the Father
 “ of all, to whom our Saviour himself prayed.
 “ We are not to pray to a brother, who has the
 “ same common Father with ourselves; Jesus
 “ himself saying, that we must pray to the
 “ Father through him.—In this we are all
 “ agreed, and are not divided about the method

“ of prayer; but should we not be divided, if
 “ some prayed to the Father, and some to the
 “ Son? Common people,” he says, “ through
 “ a great mistake, and want of distinguishing,
 “ prayed to the Son either with the Father, or
 “ without the Father*.”

The custom which has long prevailed, of offering habitually with the same Sense, religious Adoration and Prayer to the *Son*, as well as to the *Father*, is not simply an acknowledgment of *Two* all-Intelligent Agents, but is undoubtedly also a direct avowal of *Two* different *Objects* of Divine or *Supreme Worship* (for the *Son* is certainly not the *Father*); this, therefore, amounts to an open Declaration of *two Gods*: So it appears to many sincere Christians: and they think that this Practice not only seems to condemn the strict Injunctions of the Old Testament, but also the Precepts and Example of Christ himself†; who *came not to be ministered*

* Dr. Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ, vol. ii, p. 160. Lactantius, Eusebius, and some other early Christian writers, seem to have held much the same opinion in respect to *Prayer*.—Ibid. p. 156, 166, 168. See what *Justin Martyr* has said on this subject, note *, p. 201, of this tract.

† Our Saviour (John iv, 22, 23), plainly declares himself to be a *Worshipper of the Father*, with the rest of the Jews of

unto, but to minister; and, therefore, never could intend that his Disciples should place him on an Equality with his God and Father; his *Dependence* on Whom he often signifies in the most solemn and expressive manner.

When our Redeemer was expiring on the Cross, he sends forth this emphatical Exclamation! “ *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*”

his time: and, very probably, Worshipped with them often in their Synagogues.—See Prideaux’s *Connex.* vol. i, p. 375. There are a very few passages (as that in Acts vii, 59) which appear to some to favour Prayer or *Petition to Christ*: but we (who, however, do not presume to decide for others) are cautious of yielding to any singular or, obscure text, an equal weight with the *many* clear Rules of the Gospels and Epistles on this point; as the opinion, just mentioned, doth not consist with those general Precepts and Examples.—See Matt. vi, 6, 9; xxvi, 27, 30; John xvi, 23, 24, and texts, note *, p. 203. As to the instance referred to above, viz. Acts vii, 59, it was a very particular case; Christ himself having just before actually *Appeared* to St. *Stephen*, ready, it should seem, to support him.—See the Rev. P. Cardale’s *Enquiry, &c.*, p. 41, printed 1776.

Whenever we are at a loss to form our judgment on this, or on any controverted article of importance, there seems to be left to us no *Rule* more satisfactory and justifiable, than that of being determined (as has been before observed, see the Introduction) by the *most* evidence, and the *clearest* we can find in the *Scriptures*.

“*saken me * ?*” and again he saith, *even after his glorious Resurrection †* (John xx, 17), *I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to MY GOD and your God.* These plain and re-

* Manifestly applying to himself, and his most affecting situation, the prophetic words of Psalm xxii; to the *whole* of which, most likely, he referred: and it is impossible to read the account of the Crucifixion, &c., given by the Evangelists, and the words of that *Psalm*, without being struck with the minute exactness of the Prediction: many remarkable *particulars* of which, apply distinctly and directly to *Christ*, and to no other Person that ever appeared in the World. The same may be said of Isa. liii.—See an observable passage in the Prophet Micah v, 1, which compare with Matt. xxvii, 30.

† That he was raised from the Dead (as he had foretold, Matt. xvii, 23) and *Glorified* by the *Power of God* (or *the Father*), see Acts ii, 32; Ibid. iii, 13, 15; Ibid. v, 30, 31; Ibid. x, 40; Ibid. xiii, 30; Rom. viii, 11; Ibid. x, 9; 1 Cor. vi, 14; 2 Cor. xiii, 4; Gal. i, 1; 1 Thess. i, 10; Heb. xiii, 20; 1 Pet. i, 21, &c. In John x, 18, Christ says, *I have power to lay it (his life) down, and have power to take it again.* Howsoever this passage is to be understood, our Saviour sufficiently declares his Dependence by saying directly, *This Commandment* (or *Promise*) *have I received of my Father:* which intimation may also explain John ii, 19. But see the texts referred to above in this note, which are all clear and express. In Deut. xi, 14, 15, we find Moses declaring that *he* would do what, it is certainly meant that, *God himself* would do. The like phraseology (*personating* language) appears to be used by Christ.—John xiv, 13, 14. This last verse is paraphrased thus, by Dr. S. Clarke: “Whatsoever

markable Expressions of our Saviour's, which fully acknowledge the superiority of the Deity, and his dependence upon him, one should think sufficient to Impress for ever their very great difference. In John xiv, 28, he directly says, *my Father is GREATER than I*. In order to reconcile this pointed assertion to the doctrine of the *Trinity*, we are sometimes told, that Christ only meant to say here, that his Father was *greater* than himself *as to his human Nature, and not with respect to his Divine*. But how is it possible to think that Christ, either here or any where else, ever meant to compare his *mortal Nature* with the most perfect and ineffable Nature of God Most High? If he meant any comparison, it must surely have related to his *Spiritual or heavenly Nature* (whatever it might be), since *that* only could bear any sort of similitude with his Father. In the words above, therefore, our Saviour clearly professes his subordination; and again (in Matt. xxiv, 36, and

“ ye shall ask in my Name, I will take Care, when I am returned to my Father, that it shall be granted you.”

That the *Son* was raised from the Dead, *by the Father*, plainly appears to be the Doctrine of our Established Church. “ But chiefly are we bound to *praise Thee* [Holy “ Father] for the glorious Resurrection of *thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord*.”—Proper Pref. for Easter.

Mark xiii, 32), he declares his *Knowledge* (and here he certainly referred to his *superior* part) to be below that of his Father's*."

The *Miracles* wrought by Christ, were urged by him to the Jews, not as proofs of his being *Equal* with the Father, but as manifest signs that he was employed by Him.—John v, 36. God often caused Miracles to be done likewise by the Apostles and Disciples of Christ, and in *Christ's Name*, during his Life, and also after his Ascension;—which served to confirm again the Truth and high Authority of his Mission.

* See Acts i, 7. He (may his Name be for ever Honour-ed), who in perfect Humility, refused even the appellation of *Good*; could never mean to *Equal* himself with the Great Source of All Goodness, as he declares *God alone* to be (Matt. xix, 17), *Why callest thou Me good? There is none Good but One* (Gr. *ἓς, One Person*), *that is, God*;—"my Father who is in Heaven." These additional Words (*my Father who is in Heaven*), are either a *Paraphrase* of some early Writers, or were found in some very ancient MSS., as they are cited, with the rest of the Text, by *Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clem. Alexandrinus, &c.*—See Dr. Samuel Clarke's Works, fol. edit., vol. 4, p. 24, 267. *Novatian*, on this Passage (Matt. xix, 17), says, "Whom (i. e. the Father) our Lord deservedly pronounces to be *Alone Good* (*Novatian* adds excellently); of whose Goodness the Whole "World is Witness."

HOWEVER strongly prejudiced men may be from the long prevalence of human system, it is certain that the sacred writers have taken great pains to assert the Supremacy and unequalled Majesty of the one God and Father of the Universe: and have also so clearly discriminated the Characters of the Almighty and his Messenger, that it is truly astonishing how they could ever be confounded. St. Paul, for instance, has settled these great points, one should think, in the most satisfactory manner.—Eph. iv, 6, and 1 Tim. ii, 5. But, not to confine ourselves to the Apostle's assertions, let us attend to the words of Christ himself. *I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.*—John vi, 38. *Neither came I of myself, but he (God) sent me.*—John viii, 42. In these, and in many other passages, he expressly marks his Inferiority, by declaring his Submission to the Divine Will; and also distinguishes himself from God who *sent* him; as in John xii, 44. *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.* Again (John v, 31, 36): *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true**. *The works which the Father*

* In citing the 32d ver. of John v, in a former Edition of this work, a mistake was made, respecting the *Person* to

hath given me to finish; the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me, &c. He, indeed, insists on his *Mediatorial* Character in very emphatic words. *No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*—John xiv, 6. From these texts it is perfectly clear that the *Persons* of our Saviour and of God are absolutely *distinct*: and it is as clear that the former claimed no higher honours than an acknowledgment of his divine Mission*, and a sincere acceptance of him as the appointed Medium of Salvation to all those who will learn his doctrines and obey them. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but*

whom the words were applied. The error is corrected here, by substituting the 36th ver. of the same chapter.

* He tells the Jews (John v, 23), *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.* As if he had said, Those who honour not the Ambassador, honour not the Potentate who sent him. That Christ assumed here no higher dignity than that of God's Messenger or Ambassador, is plain from his telling the Jews just before (ver. 19), *That the son can do nothing of himself*: And (ver. 27) that the Father had *Given him authority to execute Judgment, also, because he is the Son of man*. The Son of man prophesied of by Daniel.—Dan. vii, 13, 14.

is passed from death unto life.—John v, 24. The Holy Innocent Jesus, *the righteous servant of the LORD* (Isa. xlix, 5, 6; liii, 11), could never think of assuming an Equality with his *Almighty Principal, by whom*, he says, *he lived* (John vi, 57): and whom he declares to be greater *than all*.—John x, 29*. His virtuous Ambition, though leading to glorious effects, was yet of a far humbler nature, and engrossed all his attention, it was, as he asserts, *To do the Will of Him that sent him, and to finish his work.*—John iv, 34.

When we consider the plain consequences which follow from these and many other expressions of the same import, we can hardly suppose that our Saviour would have made use of them, if he had intended that men should believe him to be *Equal* with God, in any sense, or in any part of his Nature; at least he certainly would have taken occasion to explain himself (as he did in several instances of less moment, carefully recorded), and not have left such unreserved and significant declarations

* *My Father is greater than all*, saith Christ. The Athanasian Creed, however, asserts that the FATHER is *not greater* than all. Let others try to reconcile the presumptuous Contradiction.

open to improper constructions, which might derogate from his real dignity, and lead to pernicious errors. The notion that he sometimes expressed himself according to his *Divine*, and sometimes according to his *human Nature* (a distinction which neither Christ nor his Apostles taught), though it may be thought useful on some occasions, will not always answer the purpose designed, as will be immediately shewn; and is, besides, a dangerous opinion, affording a ready means to shift the sense of even the plainest words and doctrines of Christ, whenever it may be found convenient;—to render them full of ambiguity, and their general Authority unequal and uncertain.

We, therefore, do not perceive how such an Opinion can be supported without great confusion; nor indeed without expunging very many passages from the New Testament. For example: If our Lord had really *known* the day of Judgment, by any innate Perfection, or absolute and complete union of divine Prescience, would he then have denied that Knowledge directly and indefinitely (Matt. xxiv, 36; Mark xiii, 32), without the least caution to his hearers concerning his *Omniscient* Nature? Who will venture to charge him with such duplicity? He might have concealed his Knowledge with-

out *denying* it; by signifying that it would be highly improper (as is most likely) to reveal the particular day of Judgment. But he says positively, that *he did not know it, but his Father only**.—Matt. xxiv, 36.

* Some have been so much startled at this declaration of our Lord, that they have laboured all in their power to evade it; injudiciously concluding, that to believe the Knowledge of Christ was *at all* limited, would lower his real Character, weaken his Authority with men, and, perhaps, render it suspected: Whereas, the sincere ingenuous Declaration makes directly in his favour; for, had he been an Impostor, he certainly would have concealed this ignorance. Whether Christ alluded to *the Day of Judgment*, or to *the Destruction of Jerusalem*, and *the End of the Jewish Policy*; it makes no difference with respect to the Argument above.

“ I think the Intention of our Saviour, in this Passage, is
 “ to declare, that, as the Father Alone is *Ἀυτὸθεός*, God
 “ Unoriginate and of Himself; and *Ἀυτοαγαθός*, The Alone
 “ Underived Fountain of Goodness; upon which account it is
 “ affirmed in Scripture, that *There is None Good, but One*,
 “ that is God the Father, as almost All Primitive Writers
 “ unanimously cite that Text: And as He is also the Alone
 “ Fountain of All Power, insomuch that our Lord says con-
 “ cerning himself, *The Son can do nothing of himself*.—John
 “ v, 19, 30. So He (*the Father*) is likewise the Alone Foun-
 “ tain of All Knowledge, insomuch that no one knows any
 “ thing, no not even the Son himself, but by Communica-
 “ tion from Him.

“ *Irenæus* and even *Basil* understand this Text, not of the

Our Saviour's reply to the singular request of the children of Zebedee and their Mother (Matt. xx, 20—23), may convince us that he pretended *not* to an *equality* with God, or to a nature Omnipotent. *To sit on my right hand, and on my left* (in his expected kingdom), he says, *is not MINE to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

Again : When Christ said expressly, *my Father is greater than I* ; did he then allude to his *Divine*, or to his *Human Nature* ? If to the First, then he certainly declared *the Father* to be *Greater* than himself in the *Highest Respect* : But if he referred to his *human Nature* only, then we must suppose that he affirmed the *Almighty Father*, the *All-Perfect*, *Unchangeable*, and *Eternal God of the Universe*, to be *Greater* than his *human Nature* ! Could such a Declaration as *this* be at all necessary ? It is utterly incompatible with the wisdom of our Lord, and therefore (as has been noticed, p. 124) impossible that he should have intended it. “ When any “ Person affirms Another to be *Greater than* “ *Himself*, he must of necessity mean, *Greater*

“ *Human Nature* of Christ, but of his *whole Person*.”—Dr. Clarke, Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 309, 310.

“than He Himself is in his Greatest Capacity.”
—Dr. Clarke.

From the context (John xiv, &c.), it is most probable, that our Lord's *design* here was, to encourage his disciples (whose hearts were wounded with the thoughts of losing him), by assuring them that when he left this world, he should go to the Great Fountain of all Happiness, to the ever-blessed God, by whose aid he had taught the divine lessons they had heard, and performed all the wonders they had seen: and, therefore, if they loved him, they had reason, not to despond, but to rejoice; since, by a still nearer connexion with the Supreme Power, after having finished the high Trust he had been sent to execute, his own felicity would be increased in a very high degree, and made permanent:—that he went to prepare a place intended for them in the Heavenly Mansions (or *house of God**), and should not fail, by his intercession (ver. 16), to obtain an effectual support for them,

* John xiv, 2. Dr. Clarke, in his paraphrase on this passage, considers the words, *my Father's house*, literally, as signifying *Heaven*. Others have supposed (but the interpretation is not the most obvious) that our Lord alludes here to the *Christian Church* universal.—See 1 Tim. iii, 15; Eph. i, 3; 1 Cor. xii, 28.

in the severe trials and sufferings to which they would shortly be exposed by their enemies.

It would be right and safest, without any doubt, to esteem all our Saviour's declarations and doctrines (which are generally of easy explication) as wholly free from any hazardous perplexing reservations;—as equally founded in strict Truth, and, together with his supernatural works, of Divine origin: and so we very justly may; for we are expressly warned that, *God was with him*, directing and supporting him in his Ministry with unexampled Powers, and rewarding him with far superior Glories after its consummation.

It is, therefore, very natural to believe, that the grateful Son is the last Being in the Universe who would wish to place himself, or *conat* to be placed on a *Level* with his *God* and *Father Eternal*, Whom he must reverence and love with Affection immutable, unutterable! Can we possibly doubt of this? Who was more forward, more earnestly desirous than our Saviour himself, when on earth, to vindicate the Superior Dignity, Goodness, and Authority of his heavenly Father? Is it likely, therefore, that our blessed Lord should now be Offended by our endeavours

to do the very same*? or that he will condemn us hereafter for adhering to his Example?

* In the Apocalypse (xv, 3, 4) we find a heavenly song, or hymn of exalted Praise, to *the Lord God Almighty*; called the song of Moses and of *the Lamb*; in which, we may therefore suppose *Christ himself* to have joined. We have here an instance (in a sacred Vision or Revelation) of the *Worship* offered above to *the Supreme Being*; Who *only* (i. e. in the *Highest Sense*) is declared to be *Holy*.—See 1 Sam. ii. 2. In the same Book (v, 9, 12, &c.) we have also a representation of the Honours rendered to *the Lamb*, and the reasons given—because *he was slain*; slain in the righteous Cause of true Religion and Virtue; and because *he had redeemed us to God*. The Foundation of these honours paid to *the Lamb of God*, excludes the Idea of *Supreme Worship* being signified, or that Christ was adored *as God*. But the like proportionate testimonies of reverence, love, and high respect, will be always due to the Blessed Jesus from us, who are under everlasting Obligations to him; and on account of the consummate worth and excellency of his Character, which must for ever render him dear to God and man.

The Apostle Paul has given us a plain and settled Rule for our devotions, in which the honour and respect due to Christ are properly secured.—See p. 202, 203, and note *, p. 201.

We desire to observe here, that the contents of the Book of *Revelation* appear, in general, to be *Prophetic*, and *Emblematical*, rather than *Doctrinal*. However, the sense of many passages is sufficiently clear: And if any pious Christian should be desirous of using the Forms of Praise, &c.,

In short, if language such as the preceding, will not satisfy us concerning the great difference between *God* and *Christ*, what form of sound words can be substituted to soften our Prejudices and clear our Understanding? Do we now desire Miracles to establish this indispensable

mentioned in the *Revelation*, wherein our Redeemer is sometimes joined with his Father, it should be always Remembered, that in those Forms the *Characters* of the Supreme Being, and of the *Lamb* (or Christ), are So Discriminated, that the Honours rendered to each must be meant (as has been already noticed) in a very different *Degree*. Indeed (according to the Learned Dr. *Prideaux*), *Christ* is represented (*Rev.* viii, 3, 4) as an *Angel*, the Angel of the Covenant, *Himself* (as our Mediator, and High Priest) offering up the *Prayers* of the Saints unto God.—See *Prideaux's Connex.* eighth edit., vol. i, p. 383.

It is recorded, that many of the *Primitive Christians* had used to meet together, and sing Hymns in Memory or in Honour of *Christ*. Now, this might have been done with great Innocence;—and without any intention of considering him as God: Those Hymns might be only meant (and worded accordingly) as joyful and very natural testimonies of love and gratitude (not of Supreme Worship) to the benevolent *Redeemer*. This opinion seems the more probable, as we find from the evidence of *Tertullian*, that the *Greatest Part* of Christians, in his time (second Century, when Corruptions introduced by *learned Converts* were gaining ground) were exceedingly anxious to hold fast the MONARCHY; namely, the *Universal MONARCHY* of God, the FATHER, and greatly dreaded any Infringement of it.—*Adv. Prax.* cap. iii.

Truth? *If we hear not Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles; Neither should we be persuaded though one rose from the dead to confirm it.* None of the above texts, quoted or referred to, require the least straining to apply them. While these and the like passages remain in the Bible, it will be vain and absurd to charge the assertors of the Divine Unity with being obliged to fly to dark or forced constructions. They have no need of Artifice. This very consideration is, in fact, the foundation of their comfort and peace. Contented with the simplicity of their Principles, supported by the plain and solemn declarations of Revelation; they may, without any ostentation, freely leave all *management* to Those who can venture to overlook or perplex the clearest Testimonies, if they happen to deny and resist the System which they have adopted.

It should be further observed, of the foregoing scriptures, that by whatsoever means God was pleased to communicate his Will to his creatures, in more distant Ages, it is certain with respect to us, that, Christ is appointed our unchangeable Guide; that he is ordained *the Mediator between God and men; our great High Priest; the Messenger of the new Covenant* with Mankind. *For there is none other name under*

heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.—Acts iv, 12. Notwithstanding these very Interesting circumstances, and the consideration of the very great Authority with which Christ is Invested:—To raise him to any higher Dignity than his own declarations, or those of his Apostles, will, upon the whole, clearly vindicate;—To place him on an *Equality* with the Deity, whose Ambassador he was, and from Whom he received all his Powers; is to diminish the sacred Rights, and obscure the Glory of his Father and his God: It confounds the whole system of Revelation, and, consequently, greatly obstructs its effects. The permanent Honours and real merits of Christ, neither want nor can receive any addition, or heightening lustre from the extravagant attempts of men*: on the contrary, it may be

* Our Saviour plainly manifested a readiness to admit the tokens of sincere Affection and Reverence, which are certainly due to him from all men; but he hath shewn that he is very far from being inclined to countenance any Ostentatious marks of Honour to himself; which savour too much of human frailty, and are not the fruits he expects from his Disciples.—*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my FATHER who is in heaven.*—Matt. vii, 21.

The Title *Lord*, we have observed (Preface, note), is often used in Scripture in the *Inferior* sense;—even when

feared that the ill-judging Zeal, of endeavouring to exalt the Nature of our Redeemer so far above what Reason and the Scriptures will fully justify, hath been, and is essentially injurious both to him and his doctrines. The two Dispensations, the Old and New Testament, were certainly given to destroy *Polytheism* in all its shapes: to infuse into mankind a spirit of true Piety, and universal Benevolence; and, especially, to Establish the Worship of the One Lord God of the Universe, and to promote His Glory on Earth. For these, among other mo-

applied to Christ, as is plain (John xi, 21, 22), and his other Title, *Saviour*, must likewise be taken in a *subordinate* acceptance; Because God Himself is, in the *Highest* or *Ultimate* sense, OUR SAVIOUR.—John iii, 16, 17; Rom. vi, 23; 1 Cor. xv, 57; 2 Cor. v, 18; Gal. i, 4; iv, 4, 5; Eph. ii, 4, 5; Col. i, 12, 13; 1 Tim. ii, 3, 4, 5; 1 John iv, 9, 10, 11. Nevertheless, the Titles *Lord* and *Saviour* are justly due in a *secondary*, but *emphatical* sense, to *Christ*, who suffered for us;—since *by him*, God was pleased (1 John iv, 14) to accomplish the great work of our Redemption; and hath, moreover, *Exalted him with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour*.—Acts v, 31; Heb. vii, 25. No pious Christian, therefore, will refuse to ascribe to Christ the *proper* glory or Honour he is so well entitled to, on these very Interesting accounts.—See note *, p. 201.

The Name of *Saviour*, or *Deliverer*, is sometimes given with a still *more Inferior* signification.—See Judges iii, 9, 15; 2 Kings xiii, 5; Neh. ix, 27; Acts vii, 35.

mentous purposes (as that of announcing from *God* his free gift of life eternal to the Obedient), *Christ* himself appeared*. The doctrine of the *Divine Unity* becomes, therefore, of infinite consequence. It is the Cause of *GOD*: It is the Cause of *Christ*: It is the Cause of every man who is warmed with any Gratitude to his Creator and Preserver, or has any proper Regard to himself.

Humbly bowing before the Throne of that SUPREME POWER to whom all things are possible, we shall not enter on any Argument for, or against the *Pre-existence* of our Great Master, who was so transcendent an Example of righteousness and humility†: but, in support of the

* John vii, 18; viii, 50; xvii, 3, 4, 26; xviii, 37.

† Supposing that *Christ* did *Pre-exist* in some glorious State, it by no means follows that he had *Supreme Dominion*, or that he was the *Creator*, as some have concluded. Such opinions are, indeed, utterly inconsistent with the Scripture doctrine, as (among other objections) they leave no room for his subsequent *Exaltation* and *Reward* for his Sufferings and Obedience here on Earth.—See Dr. *Lardner's* Posth. Discourses on Philipp. ii, 5—11, lately published, p. 33. An opportunity may be here taken to observe, once for all (and we can see no other satisfactory way of reconciling the Scriptures), that when, in the strong figurative language of the sacred Writers, *Christ* is called the Instrumental Creator of the Worlds, or rather *the ages*, &c. (see Eph. iii,

Momentous Cause which is herein maintained, we shall endeavour to shew further from the same Records which have been our guide, the impossibility of his being *Equal* with God. Notwithstanding what has been advanced, there are some who, perhaps, will still deem this an Invidious task; and many may consider it as no small hardship, that a Christian should

9; Col. i, 16; Heb. i, 2); this, according to many learned and eminent Christians, means no more than his being the Founder of the *new moral or Christian Dispensation* (called a *Creation unto good Works*; see Eph. ii, 10; 2 Cor. v, 17, 18), but has no relation to the Creation of the *Universe*. And those learned men appear to be right, for *God Himself* (or *the Father*) was most certainly the CREATOR; this we are early and justly taught even in our Catechisms; and, indeed, any other opinion flatly contradicts the express declarations of the Old and New Testament, from beginning to end.—See Gen. i, 1, 27, 31; vi, 7; Job xxxviii, throughout; Isa. xxxvii, 16; xlv, 24; xlv, 11, 12, 18; Mark x, 6; xiii, 19; Acts iv, 24; 1 Cor. xii, 18, 24; Rev. xiv, 7, &c. Had there been more Creators than *One*, it is most probable that, “it would have been signified in the Works of Creation,” in some such manner, that Intelligent Creatures might have been apprized of it, for very obvious purposes. If *Christ* were our Creator, *in Fact* (supposing by the Command of God), he would then be very Naturally, and, indeed, *Authoritatively*, entitled to our Worship, as our MAKER.—Psalms xcv, 6. “But in No place of Scripture “is there any Intimation (says Dr. Clarke) of *Christ* being “Worshipped on that Account.”

be compelled to seem to lessen the dignity of his Redeemer, or give up the fundamental Principle of Natural and Revealed Religion. But, thanks be to God, there is, in reality, no necessity for doing either. While we are urged by the strongest motives to obey the voice of Nature and of Truth, we can at the same time profess, with great sincerity, that zealous affection for our blessed Saviour, which may be justly expected from every grateful heart; and also all possible reverence for his true Dignity, which we have as little Inclination as Power to Injure.

Without, therefore, pretending to dispute the Pre-existence of Christ; we shall observe that, Whatever might have been his nature and Rank before he was sent on Earth, *The Opinion of a Divine Nature Proper to him, and Equal*, as it is commonly asserted, *to the Father's* (an elevation which *he* never aspired to), is evidently inconsistent with the History of the Gospel, as must appear from what has been already produced. Indeed, the very circumstance of his being *Sent* (let us suppose his dignity before his Mission as high as we may), inclines us to think, that he cannot be *equal to the Father Who sent him*: for it is Impossible to conceive that *the Father* can be *Sent* by any. But, moreover, had all the Perfections of *the Father* been en-

joyed by the *Son*, What occasion could there have been *then* to shed upon him, for the purposes of his Mission, the Extraordinary Gift of the holy Ghost;—upon him who *already* possessed Divine Wisdom and Power in the highest Degree? But no such inconsistency is maintained in the Gospel: Our Lord evidently disclaims all such intrinsic Divinity, frequently declaring, in plain words, that he *derived* all his Powers from *God his Father**, Whose unrivalled *Supremacy* he also proclaims in terms which cannot be mistaken.—John x, 29. These Truths we shall find Exemplified, if we pay attention to the circumstances of that interesting Event which closed his Mission. For, had he been

* John v, 26, 27; vi, 57; xvii, 2, 7, 22, 24. In these, as in other texts, Christ declares, in very clear and definite Expressions, that he had *Received Life and all things whatsoever from the Father*. Language which could not have been used by our Saviour if he had been God, *equal* to the *Infinitely-Perfect Father*, Who *Giveth* various Endowments to *All*, but *Receiveth* from *None*.

As *Underived Life* and *Powers* must be Absolutely the *Properties* of an *Underived Person*; so, it is therefore evident that, a *Derived Person* can possess *Derived Life and Powers only*. This shews the real *Subordination* of the *Son* to the *Father*. The *Father's Existence*, and Glorious *Powers* or *Attributes*, being *from None*, being *alone* Wholly *Underived* and *Independent*, Constitute (as has been before observed) His *Unrivalled Perfection* and *Supremacy*.

possessed of *such* a Divine Nature, *Inherent* in himself; it will be granted by all, that, as it must have been absolutely *Inseparable* from him, so it would have been sufficient to have supported his *Human Nature* on all occasions whatsoever, as effectually as any Aid from another Power. He would not, therefore, have needed to be *strengthened by an Angel*, on a solemn occasion; and he certainly might have avoided the cruel Death, which he knew his Enemies were on the point of preparing for him, *without any applications to God*.—Luke xxii, 41—44. Where would have been the Necessity or Propriety of *Praying* for help or relief which he did not *really want*? If it should be supposed (notwithstanding the supposition has no countenance in the text), that “Christ must be understood here, to have only *Prayed* that he might be allowed to make use of the Power he had *in himself* to avoid his Enemies;” we answer, that a stronger circumstance cannot be produced to shew his *Dependence* on the Deity. Our Saviour was deeply affected by the approach of his Crucifixion, of which he had a quick sensibility; and if his Character, mild and humane as it is faithfully drawn, be properly considered, we can be but little surprised at this: his benign and tender Spirit, though conscious of its glorious Victory over Death and the Grave, might yet

be violently shaken by his reflections on that awful Scene, those piercing Sorrows, which he was just going to manifest to the World. So inexpressibly severe were these (which he foreknew), that he seems, *at one time*, to have been anxiously desirous of escaping them, had it been consonant to the Will of the Supreme Being, to which he patiently resigned.—Matt. xxvi, 39—44; Mark xiv, 34—42*.

When he was traitorously apprehended,—far from referring on that pressing occasion to any *Divine Powers of his own*, by which he might

* A proper attention to these and some other passages in the New Testament will discover the weakness of the Hypothesis which asserts, that the *Father* and the *Son* possess (and did *always* possess) but *one Individual Will*. Whence was this Doctrine derived? Such adventurous Metaphysics may amuse the Imagination, but the *fact* is contradicted by the plain Evidence of the Gospel.

Notwithstanding the temporary depression of spirit (increased much, perhaps, by his continual watching and intense prayer) which fell on our Saviour a little before his Crucifixion, his Intrepidity at the time he was seized (John xviii, 4—8), and on many hazardous occasions, claims our Admiration. Witness his keen but just reprehensions, recorded in Matt. xxiii, which he delivered with determined fortitude, amidst many of his most vigilant and inveterate Enemies; regardless of the consequences which might, and did arise from their Malice.

easily have disappointed the merciless Jews, and at once have overwhelmed them and the Romans with confusion and destruction:—he says, with great calmness and simplicity to Peter, who had struck the servant of the high Priest, *Put up again thy sword into its place.—Thinkest thou that I cannot now Pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels?*—Matt. xxvi, 52, 53. Doubtless he would have been rescued, if he had absolutely requested it. But, for ever revered be his Memory, unwilling to disappoint the great End of his Mission, he fulfils the *Prophecies**; He, who wept at the sorrows of others, and was

* Isa. liii, throughout. This ancient Prophecy of Isaiah (which properly begins at the 13th ver. of chap. lii) is so pointed and complete, that there needs no stronger proof, that the Lord Jesus was the promised *Messiah*. Yet the wonderful Prediction of *Daniel* may be mentioned, in which, not only *the cutting off the Messiah* is foretold, but also the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.—Dan. ix, 26. Our Lord cites these Prophecies, and applies them (among others) to *himself*.—Luke xxiv, 25, 26; compare Isa. liii, 12, with Luke xxii, 37. During his Ministry he had *fixed* or *ascertained* the completion of them (concerning the cutting off the Messiah, and the following overthrow of Jerusalem) to *the then present generation*.—Matt. xxiv, 1—34; Mark ix, 31; Luke xviii, 31—33; xxi, 20—22; which came to pass accordingly.—See a full and satisfactory explanation thereof, in *Jortin's Eccl. Hist.* vol. i, p. 20

ever anxious to heal the broken heart:—who, at the very moment of his captivation (John xviii, 8, 9), was touched with benevolent concern for the safety of his followers, submits with dignified Serenity to the sharpest stings of Ingratitude, Cruelty, and Ignorance, and meets Death itself, as an illustrious *Example* of the most perfect *Obedience**.

And surely the Value of this Obedience is greatly enhanced, by the very circumstance of his really experiencing the tenderest feelings of Humanity. For had his pure and righteous Spirit been *then* supported by any other helps than those of conscious Innocence and Integrity;—or rather, had he felt himself possessed of a *Power Unlimited* and *Underived*, a *Divine Nature Inseparable* from him, which the united force of all created beings could never shake or

* Great stress is often laid by the Apostles, on this unreserved and exemplary Submission: *For as by one man's disobedience* (says St. Paul) *many were made sinners, so by the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.*—Rom. v, 19. Hence, the Honour due to Christ is not founded in Scripture, upon his *Nature* (whatsoever that may be), but upon his perfect *Obedience* to the *Divine Will*—upon his subsequent *Elevation*, and upon his being-appointed our sole *Mediator* and *Advocate* with *the Father*: A glorious Appointment, which places him so near to the Throne of God!

disturb, and which, in truth, must have raised him far indeed above the fears and overwhelming Sensations of Human Nature,—in that case, half the Merit of his Afflictions would have been lost, and all his Agony little more than an *entired* Appearance. His patient Sufferings would have been no Pattern for *Us*, had he been upheld at that trying period, by such a *Conscious, Unborrowed, and Infinite Superiority*.*.

* It may be objected to the above arguments that they prove too much: as they might be urged to shew that, if Christ had *any Supernatural Assistance* (which it is confessed by all that he had) to support him during his Ministry; he still could not be, properly, an *Example* to men who are without any such assistance. But this objection would be made without due consideration. For it should be remembered, that our Lord had his *Religion to Found*: The Instruction and Salvation of the *Worlds* were the Immense Objects. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that he (and his Apostles) should be endowed with *Supernatural Powers*, to attract the attention of mankind, and to prove his Divine Mission beyond controversy. But this Necessity can never again exist. The *Foundation is permanently laid*. Yet, the Followers of Christ are not left (as the above objection would imply) to struggle without hope of *any* of that *Divine Aid* which our Lord and his Apostles enjoyed. If men sincerely endeavour to deserve it, It is promised (and how inestimable the Privilege!) in such a measure (the *mode* signifieth not) as to enable any one to become as perfect a Disciple of our Saviour as is expected; and this is now amply sufficient.

But our Redeemer appears to have endured the whole Weight of his Calamities;—*For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation Perfect through Sufferings.*—Heb. ii, 10. But when the bitter Conflict was past, he was not left without an awful and immediate Testimony of the Father's Attention;—"the troubled Elements bear witness to his Dignity and to his Innocence*."

Deeply affected as we must, and ever ought to be, at the remembrance of those unspeakable Sufferings, and warmed with ardent Love for *that good Shepherd who laid down his Life for Us*; still it may be proper to remind ourselves often, that the Glory of our Salvation is *ultimately* due to *God*; for had not his tender mercies to his creatures prevailed, Jesus Christ had never been sent on Earth. It was the *divine Will of the Almighty* that he should appear to instruct and save sinful Men†; *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through*

* Dr. Jortin.

† John iii, 16, 17; iv, 34; vi, 38; viii, 42; xvi, 5; Rom. v, 8; viii, 32; 1 John iv, 10, &c.

Christ Jesus.—Eph. ii, 7. *Who was sent to deliver us from the Power of darkness, that we might serve the living and true God; and to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.*—St. Paul. Yet, beyond all doubt, the most unshaken reverence, united with fervent Love and Gratitude to this Great and ready Messenger, should be ever preserved; and a firm Faith in him* and his heavenly Doctrines; which, with a steady practice of them, is all he has desired or commanded.

The preceding deductions, made from those records, which alone should guide our Judgment, will, perhaps, be thought sufficient to support the opinion that Christ is not *God* (in the proper sense of that sacred word), neither can possibly be *equal* with *God*, which is all that is here meant to be proved. And in doing this we are justified by the express declaration of our Saviour himself, *my Father is greater than I*. The Scriptures are, upon the whole, very clear in this respect. It may be satisfactory, however, on so important an occasion, to produce a further, and direct testimony of St. Paul, who, speaking of Christ to the Corinthians, has this

* *As The Ambassador of Truth.*—See John iii, 15, 16, 17; iv, 14; v, 24; viii, 28, 51; x, 9; xii, 48, 49, 50; 2 John ix.

remarkable expression : *Though he was crucified through weakness, yet he Liveth by the Power of God.*—2 Cor. xiii, 4. How is this passage to be reconciled to the received System? The words of the Apostle appear indeed to be decisive on the point before us. However, to prevent the usual objections to this conclusion, it may be here again observed that, had Christ possessed a Divine Nature, *Equal to the Father's*, it must have been perpetually *Inherent*; *ever* absolutely *Inseparable* from him*; *ever Present* to sustain him : he could never then have been Crucified, as the Apostle says, *through weakness*, neither could he, with any possible consistency, be said to *LIVE by the Power of God*.

* This must assuredly be true of *imane Divinity*, and must, therefore, for ever prevail with *God* himself. The following quotation, from a learned and ingenious Clergyman of the Established Church (who was commenting on the general Strength of human Affections), points out the inconsistency of supposing Christ to have possessed *proper Divinity*. "How came it to pass, that *Humanity* got the better, *for a time*, over even the *Divinity* of Christ,—that he was for giving up the cause for which he came into the world,—*was desirous*, that, if possible, the cup might pass from him?—intimating, in the very act of resignation, to his approaching fate, that he was led to it, not by his *own will*, but by the *will of his Father*;—not *my will*, says he, but *thine* be done."—Late Rev. C. Berrow's *Lapse of human Souls*, note †, p. 134. What kind of Divinity could this writer suppose Christ to have possessed?

For it is apparent that, had he enjoyed such an Independent Divine Nature, he would have *Lived necessarily*; and it is highly reasonable to think, that his inferior part would have been raised by his *own* Omnipotence (and the fact specially recorded *), without any Aid or Interference of *the Father*: the exertion of Whose mighty Power (Eph. i, 19, 20), where it was not really wanted, would appear nugatory, and unbecoming the divine Wisdom. This must be allowed by Those who, to solve the Difficulties which Scripture presents against their System; so often insist on the *two* Natures *complete* in Christ, the *Divine* and *Human*. But they do not seem to reflect that, if they were pressed on this Article, they would find themselves driven to maintain that Jesus Christ is not *one*, but *two* Persons or intelligent Agents. This was the Doctrine of *Nestorius*, condemned and anathematized in the Council of Ephesus, at which more than two hundred Bishops assisted †.

* The very contrary, however, seems to be Recorded: Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was Raised from the Dead, according to my Gospel.—2 Tim. ii, 8.

† See *Discourses on the Divine Unity*, by Mr. W. Christie, jun. of Montrose, 1790, a valuable work, Clear, Learned, and Satisfactory, second edit., p. 90—97.

It must be owned that Eccl. Hist. gives us but a sad ac-

If the usual notion of these *two Natures* in Christ were authenticated in the New Testament, or found at all sufficient to clear away the perplexities which incessantly arise from placing him on a level with the *Father*, we might then be cautious how we refused to make use of a Key of such importance. But it is plain that, in the mode this doctrine is still offered to us, it is neither reconcileable to reason, nor to the Scriptures; as will be further seen in what follows: and, therefore, although the hypothesis may be well intended, it cannot possibly have any good effect in the Issue*.

Some of the modern professors of Orthodoxy, as it is termed, though strenuous defenders of the doctrine of *two* infinitely different Natures in

count of the Abilities, Disinterestedness, and Moderation of the Prelates assembled at Ephesus (fifth Century).—See Jortin's Eccl. Hist., vol. iv, p. 272—277.

* Mr. Emlyn long since pointed out some dangerous consequences, which follow from the admission of this doctrine; as it seems too evidently to put *Equivocation* into the mouth of that Just One, whose Simplicity and regard to Truth were Unequalled.—See *Christie's Discourses* on the Divine Unity, lately published at Montrose, 2d edit., p. 102—110, wherein a large quotation from Mr. Emlyn is given on this subject.

our Saviour, yet endeavour to steer clear of the rock on which Nestorius split; but their art doth not appear sufficient to save them from a gulf which immediately presents itself. These, therefore, in consonance with the council of Ephesus, will by no means allow that Christ is *two* Persons. "Christ," say they, "though consisting of two different natures, *viz.* the divine and human, is not two *persons*, but one divine *person*; the human nature, in him, not being a whole principle of action, but existing in the more perfect one. By the union of the divine and human nature *one Individual*, or whole is constituted; that is, *one Principle of acting: for whatever Christ's humanity does, that does his Divinity joined therewith.*" Now this opinion involves us in consequences so totally inconsistent, that the notion of Nestorius, wild as it may be, yet appears the more reasonable of the two. For instance: According to the doctrine called Orthodox (which supposes that this perfect and indissoluble union of the *two* Natures took place before Christ entered on his Ministry), it clearly and inevitably follows, that when Christ *Wept*, when in agony he *Prayed for assistance, unto Him that was able to save him from death* (Heb. v, 7): and when he expressed, during his *sufferings*, in the strong-

est terms, his *Dependence* on God*, his supposed Impassible and Omnipotent Nature, was necessarily and *Intimately* engaged in all these feelings and Actions!—not to mention others which, on this plan, would appear still more in-

* *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—Matt. xxvii, 46; Psalm xlii, 1. This was, indeed, a very plain Confession of his *Subordinacy*, or *Dependence* on God: but the words, we believe, were not uttered in *Complaint*. It is highly probable, that the chief intention of this *loud cry* (which was at the same time a *Citation*), was as follows: It is very dejecting to conceive that Christ did, or could really think that God had *forsaken him*: We may be much relieved here, by considering that our Saviour most certainly knew that God withheld His Divine Assistance only for a *very short time*.—Matt. xvi, 21 (observe also Luke xxiii, 46, the words express the firmest confidence in God). Now, as it was a frequent and ancient custom among the Jews to refer to a *whole Psalm* (or sacred hymn), by citing only the *first words* (see an instance in Miriam the Prophetess, Exod. xv, 1—19, and ver. 20, 21): It would, therefore, be more reasonable and satisfactory to conclude, that our Lord, by this reference, concise, and well suited to his Situation, meant (in proof of his being the Messiah) to direct the Jewish Witnesses of this awful Transaction, to the *xxiiid Psalm*; which expressly and exactly *foretels* the afflicting Scene that was *Then* before them!

For the general sense of this explanation we are obliged to a learned and sensible writer in the *Commentaries and Essays*, published by the Society for promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures.—See vol. i, number iv, p. 358—359.

congruous and shocking, and be highly distressful to enlarge upon. Indeed, nothing but the unreflecting zeal of some men, can make the bringing forward such affecting representations as the above, at all necessary.

It is evident, from 2 Cor. xiii, 4, and from what has been said on that passage, that St. Paul had no idea of this Hypothesis. We shall give another instance to shew it. If such a Divine Nature, *Equal with the Father's*, had been so inseparably united to the Human Nature of the blessed Jesus, or so mysteriously blended in him as to constitute *only one Person or Individual*; he surely then could not, *for a moment*, have been *made a little lower* (or Inferior) *than the Angels, for the suffering of Death*—Heb. ii, 9, for superior Exaltation, or for any other purpose whatsoever. There would be equal consistency in supposing that the Almighty Father, for some important ends, could *have been made a little lower* than the works of His own hands*!

* The wisest and most unprejudiced men will, it is probable, think differently concerning the Nature of Christ. We truly believe it to be absolutely right, our duty and our interest, to think as Highly of our Lord as the Scriptures and Reason will justly permit. But manifest contradictions cannot be supported, and therefore certainly should

THERE are, nevertheless, some few passages in Scripture (which we have no desire to avoid) that *seem*, on an hasty observation, to declare our Saviour and the Almighty God, *One*: as the following, which, because they appear the most

have no place in Religion. It is peculiarly hard, that Inconsistencies and Impossibilities should be fastened on a Religion which, in itself, has them not. These who are induced to believe the *Pre-existence* of Christ, will naturally conclude that, his *Pre-existent part* (which they must suppose to have Animated *his* body *instead* of a *soul*), however Inferior to the Divine Being, however subject to the tenderest sensations (and any *Inferior* dependent Being, they may think, might possibly be liable to such), yet was not dissolved by Death, but, after his Crucifixion, must have been received into some place of rest, as many will conceive from Luke xxiii, 43, until it was, by the Power of God, reunited to his body the third day.

The opposers of the Supremacy of the Great Parent of the Universe, will be pleased to consider that, they *themselves* have made such discussions as those above, concerning the Nature and Character of Christ, proper, so far as the Scriptures give us light, and, indeed, absolutely necessary for the discovery and support of the Truth. There is nothing further aimed at here.

"The *Person of the Son*, is, in his Highest Capacity (as Bishop Bull has expressly owned), *Subordinate* to the *Person of the Father*;—Which is all (I think) that the Honour of God, and the *Whole Doctrine of Scripture* Oblige us *to contend for*."—Dr. S. Clarke, Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 257.

express, and have been so repeatedly insisted on, we have thought proper to select (John x, 30): "*I and my Father are One* (Gr. *εἰς*). But it is plain, from the context, that Christ meant not even here to confound his *Person* with that of his Father's, for, presently after (ver. 36), he says he is "the *Son of God*." His meaning here is, that *the Father* and *himself* are *One* with respect to their Care and Protection of the Disciples; for, "since (ver. 29) "None can pluck them out of *the Father's Hands*, and the Father has communicated "*His Power to the Son*, therefore None can "pluck them out of *the Son's Hands* * : So that "being in *the Father's Hands*, or being in *the Son's Hands*, is in effect (*εἰς*) *One and the same Thing* †."

We find the like Phrase used in other Places, as in that affecting Prayer of our Saviour, in the xviith chapter of the same Apostle, part of which is as follows :—

Ver. 20. "*Neither pray I for these alone, but*

* i. e. No power whatsoever can Deprive the sincere Disciples of Christ, of the Mercies of God, and the Benefits of Christ's Mission.

† Dr. S. Clarke.

for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

That they ALL may be One; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE in US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that They may be One, even as we are One.

I in them, and thou in me, that They may be made perfect in One, &c.

This *Unity* of the Disciples, their Converts, our Saviour, and the *Supreme Being*, is evidently *figurative*; and must signify no more than an *Union* or *Harmony*, in the Spiritual perfections of *Love*, *Beneficence*, and *universal Charity*; an *Union* in the *Benevolent Design* of Imparting the most Interesting Truths to Mankind*, and a love of the *Moral Virtues*, by the Promulgation of the Gospel; forming by these Means a

* In a like sense, *Paul* and *Apollos* are said to be (*ev*) *One*. —1 Cor. iii, 6—8. *Origen* has well Explained the Sense of *John* x, 30, by referring to *Acts* iv, 32. *The Multitude of them that believed, were of One heart and of One Soul.*

Spiritual Union between God, and Christ and his true Disciples. This appears to be the Sense of the Texts last cited; for if we insist on the *literal* construction of the Words, we shall confound all our Ideas, and involve the Scriptures and ourselves in the grossest Contradictions.

Similar *Figures* of Speech, more or less heightened, are oft times used to express that intimate connexion, which necessarily subsisted between God and *him whom he sent*; but a little calm attention will enable us to discover their true signification, and reconcile them to the *Great Principle* * that enlightens the sacred page throughout, which constitutes its everlasting support, and which the most elevated language therein was never designed to violate. For example, When our Saviour says (John xiv, 11), *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake*, it is hardly necessary to recur to a metaphorical sense to understand him. The words plainly allude to that necessary and special intercourse mentioned above; whence flowed all those Divine Instructions of our Lord, and whence all those wonderful works arose

* Deut. vi, 4; Mark xii, 29; Eph. iv, 6, &c.

which he refers to, as sensible evidences of his communication with God.

I am in the Father:—intimating, *I am in concord with the Father*, that is, acting in perfect agreement to his Divine Will and Counsels. This construction is justified by the words of Christ himself (John viii, 28, 29), *I do nothing of myself, ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me : the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please him.*

And the Father in me:—this expression is easily comprehended, *for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily* (Col. ii, 9), or *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell* (Col. i. 19*). That is, it pleased the

* Or, as some translate, *it pleased the Father, by him to inhabit all fulness*; i. e. to be Universally known and acknowledged, through the Ministry of Christ. Several learned Commentators, ancient and modern, have supposed that in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, the Apostle speaks (as in some other Passages of his Writings) in bold expressive Figures, of the new Moral Creation, or Renovation of the Moral World, by the powerful Effects of the Christian Dispensation.—See 2 Cor. v, 17, 18; Eph. chap. i, ii, and iii. See also, Two Excellent Discourses, on the Creation of all things by Jesus Christ; and on the Resur-

Almighty, that his wisdom, power, and benevolence, should shine conspicuously and fully, or competently, in Christ his sacred Messenger; who, *faithful* (Heb. iii, 2) *to him that appointed him*, declares accordingly, *the Father that dwelleth in me**, *He doeth the works* (John xiv, 10); and again, *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me*.—John vii, 16. *For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a Commandment, what I should say and what I should speak*.—John xii, 49†. Now, it must

rection of the Dead, &c.; by the Rev. Mr. Tyrwhitt, of Jesus College, Cambridge, 1787.

The words quoted above, viz. *for, in him* (Christ) *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, should be understood with some proportionate degree of allowance for the Figures of Grecian Eloquence; for the same gifted Writer, Prays that the Christians of Ephesus might *be filled with all the fulness of God*.—Eph. iii, 19.

* In a sense exceedingly more limited, *God* is said to *Dwell* in all true and virtuous Believers. *I will dwell in them, and walk in* (or with) *them; and I will be their God;—a Father to them;—and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty* (2 Cor. vi, 16—18).—See John xiv, 20.

† In consequence of which, he very naturally says in another place, *ye believe in God, believe also in me* (John xiv, 1); i. e. in my divine Mission and Doctrines. This is,

appear highly unnecessary and discordant, that a Being ever possessing (according to the current opinion) *Supreme Perfection*, should have occasion to receive *Instructions* and *Commands* concerning what he should say and what he should speak. Christ not only received them from God, but also always most willingly obeyed them. *As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.* —John xiv, 31.

These very plain Declarations of our Lord, that his Power, and his *Wisdom* also, were derived from the *Father*; will assist us in comprehending what is advanced in the famous passage, which introduces with great dignity, the Writings of the Apostle who records these declarations. By the *Logos*, or the *Word*, in the beginning of St. John's Gospel, the Divine *Wisdom* or *Reason* seems to be meant (so it is pretty generally now understood); namely, *the Wisdom of God, manifested to the World by His anointed Messenger, the Christ or Messiah, and residing in*

indeed, explained sufficiently, Ibid. xii, 44: *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but (rather) on Him that sent me.— For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, He gave me a Commandment, what I should say, &c. ver. 49.*
— See 2 John 9; Exod. xiv, 31.

him for that purpose*. This interpretation of a strongly figurative passage, joins in harmony.

* i. e. Such a large unprecedented degree of the Father's *Wisdom* (and *Power*) was imparted to Christ, as enabled him to fulfil all the momentous purposes of his Mission. This Divine *Wisdom*, or *Reason*, we think, has much the same signification here, as the more usual *comprehensive* Phrase, *Spirit of God*, the *Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding*, and of *might or Power* (Isa. xi, 2), of Which, Christ is said, in the other Evangelists, to have been full. St. John, therefore, by the term $\delta \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma$, most probably, meant the *Divine Reason*, by which God had planned the beautiful Universe around us. What He planned by His *Reason* or *Wisdom*, He himself Created by His *Great Power*.—Jer. xxvii, 5.

Dr. Clarke has allowed, "that the *Jews* and *Jewish Christians* were wont to *Personate* the *internal Wisdom* (the $\lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma \sigma \upsilon \delta \iota \alpha \beta \epsilon \tau \omicron \varsigma$) of God, or to speak of it *Figuratively* (according to the Genius of their Language) as of a *Person*."—*Script. Doct.*

It should however be mentioned, that the Unitarians of Poland and Transylvania, thought that St. John alluded, at the head of his Book, "not to the Beginning of the *Material Creation*, but to the *Beginning of the Gospel*; that is, when John the *Baptist* began to preach Repentance to the Jews, which St. Mark (chap. i, 1) directly calls the *Beginning of the Gospel*. Thus the whole Preface of St. John, was ingeniously Interpreted by those Unitarians, of the *New Spiritual Creation*, or *Moral Renovation* of the World, by Jesus Christ."—See Mr. Christie's *Discourses*, fifth edition, p. 202. This solution would accord with those Expressions in St. Paul's Epistles, as Col. i, 16, where, all things are said to have been (it must be understood, by the appoint-

with our Saviour's expressions above ; and is, in all appearance, confirmed frequently also by Christ himself, in the same Evangelist. For instance (John xiv, 24) ; *The Word (Doctrine) which ye hear, is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.* Here, in the Greek original, the same term, ὁ λόγος, *the Word*, is used as in the beginning of this Gospel ; and in many other places where the *Doctrine* of Christ is plainly intended. Thus, by *the Word* (ὁ λόγος, John xvii, 17), *the Gospel* is evidently meant, or the heavenly *Doctrine* delivered by Christ, and which he had received from the Father.—See also Matt. xiii, 23. Further : this solution of St. John's meaning is in perfect agreement with an ancient Prophecy, which directly points to the Messiah : *The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet*

ment of God) “ created by or Through Christ ;” that is, all Things relating to the *Gospel Œconomy*.—Eph. ii, 10. There may be Difficulties in clearing the true Sense of St. John's *Introduction* on any Hypothesis ; but the *Trinitarian* Explanation is altogether *Inconsistent*.

Even if the Person of the Son be intended by *the Word* (John i, 1, 2), Dr. Clarke has shewn, that he is called God in the *Inferiour* Sense (as in Heb. i, 8, 9), because of ὁ θεός, i. e. *The Supreme* or *Self-Existent* God, Whom *the Word* is expressly said to have been *With*.—See Dr. Clarke's Works, folio edit., vol. iv, p. 348. But this Hypothesis, of an *Inferior* God being *with* the *Supreme* God from the *Beginning*, seems to be contradicted in Deut. xxxii, 39.

*from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me (Moses); unto him ye shall hearken.—I (saith the Lord God) will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him—Deut. xviii, 15, 18, 19.—See Acts iii, 22, 23. It would be difficult to reconcile the Expressions in this Prophecy and those in St. John's Preface, to any other sense than that above offered: and, indeed, we find that the same Explication has been maintained by some of the best Commentators, who perceived plainly enough that the Wisdom and Power which appeared in Christ, were by himself attributed to *the Father*.*

So that, divested of all metaphor, St. John seems to intend, that God, in order to bring forward His great designs, was pleased to *Communicate* His divine Wisdom and Power, in the most liberal manner, to His well-beloved Son, the man Christ Jesus, which fully qualified him for his Ministry. The common hypothesis, namely, that the Omnipresent God *Himself* was made a man, or incased, as it were, in a human

body, appears altogether revolting and impossible*.

The Apostle says (John i, 3), that, *by the Word were all things made that were made*. If he means here, as some imagine, that the *Universe* was made by the *Word*, and the *Word* was the *Son*; then, must we not be obliged to confess that the Theology of the *Platonists* seems, indeed, to be confirmed beyond a doubt†? Our *Creeds* must, in that case, be wrong, and serve only to mislead us: for they (as well as the general language of Scripture) positively ascribe the CREATION immediately to the *Father*, and not to the *Son*. That long established Creed, called the Apostles (and even the Nicene), avers

* The above opinion, if understood *literally*, as it commonly is, savours too strongly of Heathenism. It was said of Bacchus;

“————— Quod numen in isto

Corpore sit dubito; sed corpore numen in isto est.”

OVID. *METAMORPH.*

I am in doubt (says Acætes) what Deity is in that body; but in that body a Deity there is.

† See note †, p. 69, and note *, p. 82. But, in reality, there is no sort of ground, as appears above, for the supposed coincidence of Plato's Doctrine, concerning the *Word*, and that of St. John. The writings of the Apostle sufficiently overthrow any such notion.

the Father to be the Maker of Heaven and Earth. They who composed that Creed, had reason in being afraid to give His most striking and affecting Glory to another. If, therefore (on the supposition that the *Material Universe* is designed by the Apostle), we do not understand the *Word* to mean here the *Father Almighty* or his own *Wisdom* (which is ultimately the same, ver. 1), by which, together with his Power, *He* formed and arranged the Universe, we throw the Scriptures and ourselves into the greatest confusion*. *He hath made the Earth by His*

* Many, to explain the Exordium of St. John, have supposed that, by *the Word*, is there meant a *Subordinate*, or Instrumental *Creator* of All things, under the Supreme God. This is genuine *Platonism*, and has been adopted by many *Arians*, who maintain that Christ was the *Sub-Creator* of the *Heavens and the Earth*. But this Idea appears so utterly incompatible with the general assertions of the Bible, which so Peremptorily and Directly attribute *the Creation of the Universe* to the *Most High*, that we do not see how it can possibly be admitted.—See texts in note *, p. 139, to which may be here added Psalm cxxxvi throughout; Prov. iii, 19; Acts vii, 30; xiv, 15. The sacred Evidence is endless on this great Point. Now He who was our *Creator*, it is most just and natural to Believe, is our *constant Preserver*, and it is therefore as just and natural to Believe, that we must look up to Him alone (Christ being our *Mediator* and *Guide*) for our *final Destination* and Happiness. Such easy deductions as these, arising immediately from Revelation, are of intrinsic value to mankind, and render all the visionary and

power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion.—Jer. x, 10, 12. This saith the LORD,—I am the LORD that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by MYSELF.—Isa. xliv, 24. Again: I (the LORD of hosts) have made the Earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great Power and by My outstretched arm; and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto Me.—Jer. xxvii, 5; (see Neh. ix, 6). In short, if the Father himself was not the Maker of all things, the natural and almost universal Belief of Mankind must be false. But the meaning of the Apostle seems to be explained in his own writings: if we compare John i, 10, 11, 12, with John xvii, 25, and 1 John iii, 1, the latter texts will discover WHO the Apostle, most probably, alludes to, when he says in the commencement of his Gospel, “He was in the World, and the World “was made by him, and the World knew him not,” &c.: i. e. The Father, or His Divine Wisdom was manifested, in a most signal manner, to this part of His Creation; His sacred Light (the*

perplexing systems of the human mind, vain and unnecessary.

* See also Rev. iv, 8, 11.

engrafted word *), shining Eminently in His especial Messenger and Son Christ Jesus; yet, the gross and depraved faculties of men did not perceive it.—John i, 5. In truth it is not a little surprising that men should indulge their Imaginations so far as to suppose the *Son* to be the *Creator*, since he himself has declared the very contrary, as we find in the records of St. Mark (xiii, 19), and also in St. Matthew (xix, 4) †.

* James i, 21, compare John vii, 16, 17. Christ observes (John x, 35), that *the word of God* (ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ) *came unto* the Prophets (and some Jewish rulers); that is, they were *Divinely Inspired*, or *Instructed*.—See 1 Kings iii, 28 (therefore, sometimes called *gods*, in the Inferior acceptation). And, in a like Sense, *the word* (Wisdom) *of God*, may be said to have *come unto*, and to have *dwelt in* the holy Jesus (*i. e.* by *Communication*), though in a Manner and Degree far more Intimate and Astonishing; for, *God* (saith *John the Baptist*) *Giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*.—John iii, 34. At his Birth, and in his Childhood, God was pleased to Distinguish him by very Extraordinary Manifestations and Endowments.—Luke, chap. ii. And at his *Baptism* (Matt. iii, 16, 17), just before he began his Public Ministry, an Open and Illustrious Accomplishment of an ancient Prophecy took place: *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him*, &c.—Isa. chap. xi.

† An exemplary Confessor in the cause of Truth, has very judiciously observed that “it would be highly extraordinary “that *Christ*,” as some will have it, “should be styled the “*Word*, and also *God*, in the beginning of St. John’s Book,

As this subject is of the very first magnitude, we shall moreover observe, that the opinion of Christ's being the *Creator*, is expressly Contradicted by the whole choir of the Apostles (St. John with the rest), in their united Prayer (Acts iv, 24, &c.); which also exemplifies to us, *Who* it was that *they* believed to be the *proper Object* of Prayer. *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to GOD with one accord, and said, LORD, Thou art GOD, who*

"and that the Apostle should never afterwards give that Title to Jesus, or call him *God* throughout his Gospel. Again: *The Word* is considered as *God the Creator of all things*, at the commencement of the same Gospel; Whereas *Christ* is soon afterwards introduced declaring himself to be dependent on God; subservient to his *Will* and *Commands*, and receiving Life and every thing from Him: The same Jesus also asserting that *the Father is the Only true God*, and, in short, acknowledging that he had the same *God and Father* in common with the rest of the human race, whom he calls his *Brethren*.—John xx, 17. Such contradictions," this Author remarks, "no writer of a sound Understanding can fall into."—See Mr. Lindsey's *Catechist*, p. 39—46. His sense is but briefly collected here.

The Title *Word* (or *Wisdom*) of *God* given to our Saviour (Rev. xix, 13) has a very easy Interpretation; he may be naturally so called, because God spake *through* or *by* him: i. e. God *Revealed* his Will to Men, by Christ. This explication is confirmed Heb. i, 1, 2.

hust made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is :— And now LORD,—Grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word ; By stretching forth Thine hand to heal ; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus.* Here we find the holy Jesus, and the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, as pointedly *Distinguished* from each other as is possible. The Apostles leave us no room for doubt.—See the whole passage (ver. 23—31) and judge impartially whether they could possibly mean to ascribe the Formation of all things to any other than to God alone. One may wonder much, that it should be still necessary to present any testimony at all, in confirmation of this Truth, which, the Scriptures, and indeed Nature itself, oblige, and must always oblige the generality of men to believe, notwithstanding the perverse urging of a contrary hypothesis by some, from a very early period : for the strange notion, that *the Father*, the Supreme Being, *was not* the Creator of the Universe, began to be adopted, with other Delusions, by the Gnostic He-

* *Holy Child*: the Greek words *ἁγίος υἱός*, Dr. Clarke observes, are rendered, Matt. xii, 18, and ver. 25 of this chapter (Acts iv), *Thy Servant*.—See Scrip. Doct. folio edit. of Dr. Clarke's Works, vol. iv, p. 89.

retics* (of *Gentile* race), even in the Infancy of Christianity ; perhaps, in the age while some of the Apostles were yet living : certain it is, that soon after their decease, those delusions were pretty widely diffused.

The beginning of St. John's Gospel, seems to have been written in imitation of the beginning of the first book of Moses ; and the Apostle certainly meant (if by *the Word*, the Creator of the *Material* System be designed), not to disagree, but to agree with the Prophet ; namely, that *God himself* Created all things in Wisdom, —by his *own* Word and Power irresistible.— See Gen. i. 1, 27, 31.; ii, 2, 3, 4. With Moses also accords the Psalmist, who (in conceptions bold and sublime), alludes to the same wonderful and sudden effects of the Divine Command (Psalm xxxiii, 6—9), *For he spake and it was done. By his word, by the breath of his mouth, the heavens, the host of heaven, and every part and member of the Universe, arose into Existence.*

That most Gracious Being, Who (our Saviour himself tells us) hath clothed the Earth with

* See Dr. Priestley's History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ, vol. i, p. 219, 220.

herbs, and ornamented it with matchless beauty (Matt. vi, 28—30); Who called into Life male and female in the beginning (Mark x, 6); Who provideth, with no sparing hand, continually even for the lowest creature (Matt. vi, 26); Whose unwearied Attention extends to the minutest things, so that not a sparrow can fall without his knowledge (Matt. x, 29); Who mercifully maketh his Sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. v, 45);—is He not The CREATOR? Hath Christ preached his benevolent FATHER in vain? Shall *He* be forgotten, from whose Exhaustless Bounty we receive every good and perfect gift, every kind and dignified affection we possess? (Matt. vii, 11; James i, 17.) Whose indulgent Compassion and ready Placability, are revealed for our comfort, and proposed for our imitation (Luke vi, 35, 36; xv, 11—32); to whose Exuberant love we owe the great Blessing which alone satisfies the awakened Soul, and renders our Existence invaluable (John iii, 16, 17); Shall His Glory be given to another? All Nature crieth aloud against it, and every grateful heart recoils at the Idea. The Title, *my Father and your Father*, or *your Heavenly Father*, which our Saviour so often applies to GOD, can have no other meaning

than that *He* was the original Parent or Maker of men, and of all things ; and is, in consequence, the PRESERVER of all. It seems impossible to give up this point, without perverting the general sense of the Scriptures, and doing the greatest violence to our inmost feelings.— See Isaiah lxiv, 8 ; Acts xvii, 24, 31 ; Rom. ix, 20*.

Sensible, therefore, of the deep Ingratitude of diverting from our Creator, and continual Protector and Benefactor, the *only* returns we can possibly offer for His unmerited Goodness, and long Forbearance ; and sensible also (from examples on record) of the extreme danger of obstinately provoking His just Indignation, notwithstanding the accumulated light He hath afforded us ;— Let us joyfully unite our Praises with the blessed in Heaven, and make their exalted Theme our own.

Great and marvellous are Thy Works, LORD God Almighty ! Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.

* St. Paul, in the beginning of ten of his fourteen Epistles, emphatically calleth God, *our Father*. The passages cited and referred to above, well explain the ground of this very expressive Appellation.

Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art Holy: for all nations shall come and worship before THEE; for Thy judgments are made manifest.*

HAVING proposed the above remarks, occasioned by St. John's Introduction, which, from its ornamented mien, has been the innocent occasion of much unhappy dispute; we shall next observe, that although the *superior* and *special* Intercourse of the Supreme Being, and our blessed Guide, is generally known and acknowledged; yet, this animating circumstance should not mislead us; should not incline us to forget

* *The song of Moses and of Christ.*—Rev. xv. 3, 4. This solemn form of Adoration, addressed to the Lord God Omnipotent, in acknowledgment of His stupendous Works, His supreme or perfect Holiness, and just and awful Government; it should be remembered, is *generally* allowed to be the record of him who penned, *In the beginning was the Word, &c.* This consideration alone is enough to make us suspect that we mistake in supposing that the Apostle in the Preface to his Gospel, meant to declare that *Jesus Christ was the MAKER of all visible, or material Things*, who is in no place of Scripture worshipped *as such*.—See Rev. x. 5, 6; xiv. 7. We shall only further observe on this Point, that the Prophet Isaiah hath as clearly distinguished *God the LORD*, the CREATOR of *All Things*, from His future Messenger (the *Christ*) as words can *distinguish* them.—See Isa. xlii. 1—9, particularly the 5th and 6th verses.

the ever necessary distinction between the ALMIGHTY, and him to whom this divine communication was so *essential*. The most intimate connexion possible between the Deity and any other Being, can never put them on a level. We can understand this very readily on some occasions. Thus when St. John says of himself and other sincere Christians his companions; in his first Epistle (iv, 13), *Hereby know we that we dwell in him* (in God) *and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*. We are at no loss here for the Apostle's meaning; strong as the expression is, we understand no more by it than a *spiritual communication* with God: and this also had our Redeemer (who was, indeed, a *Prophet like unto Moses**), but with this glo-

* See the striking resemblance, as it is drawn by Dr. Jortin, *Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* p. 202—225, edit. 1751. The Characters and actions of Moses and of Christ, will not, indeed, bear a parallel *in all respects*; the Superiority being far too great on the side of the latter.

Perhaps, one of the strongest Proofs, to after Ages (and well worth the serious attention of all men), that Jesus was truly the promised Great Prophet, or the *Messiah*, is, his indisputable and express *Prediction* (about forty years before the event) of the *approaching* destruction of Jerusalem; particularly of the *Temple* (Matt. xxiv, 1, 2), which the Roman General in vain endeavoured to preserve: and also *of the subsequent and lasting Desolation of the Jewish State and*

rious difference, that *his* Intercourse was full, regular, and unparalleled. It may not be impertinent to observe of the last quoted passage of St. John, that he there plainly calls the holy Ghost, *God's Spirit*,—which Spirit, or *holy Influence*, being graciously transfused among the faithful disciples and followers of Christ, the Apostle, in this Epistle, distinguishes its happy effects, by declaring that it filleth all, who truly possess it, with the purest Benevolence and *Brotherly Love*.

We shall offer our humble opinion on one or two other texts, which appear to have been greatly misunderstood.

People. A People wonderfully preserved as a *standing* Evidence of the truth of the Prophecies of Christ. — Luke xxi, 24. These are permanent Testimonies of his Divine Mission, open to the Eyes and Reflection of the World even unto this hour!—See Dr. Jortin's *Remarks*, p. 20, and following pages, wherein this excellent man has shewn that these Predictions, as also those in the Old Testament, relating to Babylon and Tyre, “were *extant* long before the Event.” When we apply to the *Bible*, and read the Prophecies concerning the destruction of Babylon, of Tyre, and of Jerusalem, and find in History, and in Fact, that those Prophecies have been *literally* Accomplished; surely herein the mind may find relief from the painful conflicts of Scepticism. Humbled in the dust, those once magnificent Abodes should be remembered by all, from age to age, as the awful Monuments of Truth and Power Irresistible.

Since the Supreme Being Himself, or *His Person*, cannot possibly be *seen* by Mortal eyes; the most natural way of His manifesting his Will, his present Assistance, or his Designs to *men*; is, by a *Voice*, an *Impulse*, a *Symbol**, or by a *Representative* invested with extraordinary Powers. These several methods He hath chosen. It follows, that the Scripture expressions, *God was manifest in the Flesh*. *God with us*, &c., should not be taken *literally*. The words, *God with us*, as they are meant *emphatically* (Matt. i, 23), must there imply *some Extraordinary manifestation of his WILL, and not of his PERSON*, which is *Invisible*: For as to the expression itself, *God with us*, to take it *literally*, or in a common acceptance, we all know that *God is with us* now, and with every part of the Universe *Eternally* (whether He signifies it *particularly* or not), and therefore *His Presence* neither *was*, nor is confined to any one spot, nor to any given time: This both Scripture and Reason demonstrate, and also justify the sense here put upon the text.

* The *Shekinah*, or the *Divine Glory*, anciently appearing in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple of Solomon (Exod. xl, 34; 2 Chron. vii, 1—3), was again made visible at the *Transfiguration* of Christ.—Matt. xvii, 5. It was sometimes accompanied with an oracular Voice, as in the last instance, and was always a *Signal* of the Divine Presence, Approbation, and Assistance.—See 2 Pet. i, 17, 18.

Again: God may be said, by an easy figure, to be *manifest in the Flesh*, or to *dwell in the Flesh*, when any human Being is *especially* Commissioned by Him, and miraculously enabled to *do his Will, or work his works*, as in the instance of Moses, &c. &c. This construction was familiar. Such Oriental phrases as the above, have been too hastily laid hold of to prove Christ to be the *Most High God*; since, if the (*revealed*) *Nature of the Deity* be at all considered*, they must have a very different sense; they must infer, that *Christ*, notwithstanding his very great Authority and Power, was, as St. Paul tells us, *the Image* (or *Repre-*

* Infinite, *Whom the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain!*—2 Chron. ii, 6; vi, 18. *Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.*—1 Tim. vi, 16.—See also John v, 37; 1 John iv, 12. The expression of our Saviour, addressed to the Jews of his time (John v, 37), is remarkable.

When our Saviour says to Philip (John xiv, 9)—*he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*: the true sense is,—*he that hath seen me, hath seen* (by my miraculous works) the great and immediate *Representative* of the Father. For, to *see the Father himself*, in a literal sense, is impossible. Besides (2 John 3), *the Son* could not be *the Father*. See John i, 18, where the phrase,—*who is in the bosom of the Father*, probably signifies, that *Christ* was most intimately acquainted with the designs of God, and highest in His favour.

sentative) of the Invisible God (Col. i, 15), and, consequently, not God himself.*

In reading the Scriptures, it is absolutely ne-

* It should be mentioned that the text, "*God was manifest in the flesh,*" has been disputed, as to the *authenticity* of the *first* word, by Sir Isaac Newton and others. Dr. Priestley says (*Illustrations of certain Scripture Passages*, p. 38), "Sir Isaac Newton has fully demonstrated, that, in the original, this text was not, *God was manifest in the flesh*, but *who was manifest in the flesh*; and a very small alteration in the manner of writing Greek is sufficient for that purpose. The oldest Manuscript in the world, which I have examined myself, has been manifestly altered from the one to the other, as appears by the difference in the colour of the Ink." In addition to this, an unbiassed reader would consider the words which follow in 1 Tim. iii, 16, and judge whether it be probable that the apostle could mean to say that *God himself was received up into Glory*, &c.

The 1 John v, 20, has been selected by some to shew, that *Jesus Christ* is there said to be *the true God*; notwithstanding the same *Jesus Christ* solemnly declares (John xvii, 3), that *the FATHER is the Only true God*. The words in 1 John v, 20, *this is the true God*, must, therefore, necessarily refer to *the Father* (as many have observed):—For, if the *Son* be *the true God*, then who is *the Father*? How many *True Gods* have we? Christ declares, that *the Father is the ONLY true God*; and the Apostle, say some men, asserts, that *Jesus Christ* (the Father's Messenger) is *the true God* also. Behold the force of Prejudice, which would set Christ and his Apostles at variance with each

cessary for us to make great allowances for the free and bold effusions of the Eastern Idiom;

other!—Compare 1 John v, 20, with John vii, 28, 29; viii, 26, 27; wherein, *He that is true*, or *the true God*, is again most evidently distinguished from His Son and Ambassador.

If Christ be God, in the *complete* sense of the word, the *true God* of the Scriptures; he must then be *his own God*, and also *his own Father*; for there is no other *true God*, than the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, spoken of in the Bible; as Dr. Priestley has well observed, in his *Letters to Dr. Geddes*, 1787.

Three or four other Controverted passages, which have been perpetually cited to confirm the Notion, that Christ is God, may as well be noticed here. Philipp. ii, 6, which, as it stands in our present Version, is a direct Contradiction to Christ's own words, *my Father is greater than I*. It should have been translated,—*Who being in the form of God (i. e. being invested with divine Powers), “ did not eagerly aspire, “ or covet to be honoured as God;” But made himself of no reputation, &c.* Ver. 10, should rather have been rendered,—“ That *in* (not *at*) the name of Jesus every knee should bow,” &c. (The Gr. is *in*), which agrees with the directions of Christ himself (John xvi, 23, and elsewhere); viz. that we should pray, or bow *in his Name* (to the *Father*), confessing that he is Lord (saith St. Paul), *to the Glory of God the Father*.

Rom. ix, 5. It has been shewn by several judicious Writers (of different sentiments concerning Christ), that this text, supposing the passage to be *entirely* genuine, might have been rendered with propriety, in this manner (making a proper pause after the words, *Christ came*); *God*,

otherwise we, who are much unused to them, shall often be apt to confound the Deity with his Agents. When St. Paul says to the Galatians, that “ the Churches of Judea *Glorified*

who is over all, be blessed for ever. Amen. Or thus, *Of whom Christ came, who is over all: God be blessed for ever. Amen.* To assert that *Christ* is *The God over All*, was held to be rash and heretical, in the early times of the Church; which shews that the Apostle’s meaning was not understood *then*, as it now often is. Indeed, “ the word, *God*, is wanting in “ this passage, in Many of the most ancient MSS.”—Dr. Clarke.

Heb. i, 8. Some of the most learned maintain, that the words here, might have been properly rendered;—*Unto the Son, he saith, God is (or God will be) thy throne for ever and ever* (alluding to the Firmness of Christ’s Kingdom): and certainly this construction agrees greatly better with the Context. This passage is a citation from Psalm xlv, 6, and the original Hebrew (according to Dr. Clarke), will also admit of the translation here inserted. However, if this should not be allowed, we must conclude, that Christ, in the text (Heb. i, 8), is called a *God* in the *Inferior* Sense; because of what immediately follows, viz.—*Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee, &c.*

We shall just observe concerning Isa. ix, 6, that, in our English Translation, the *Son* is called *The everlasting Father* (instead of *the Father of the future Age*, i. e. the *Gospel Age*)! and this glaring Absurdity has held its place in our Bibles for almost two hundred years. The latter part of this passage (ver. 6) appears, however, to have been strangely *diversified*, long before it came into the hands of our Translators.

“*God in him*” (Gal. i, 22, 24), we cannot, indeed, be in any danger, from the Expression, of mistaking the Apostle for God: but if *Christ* had happened to have made use of the same words * (or those of Moses, Dent. xi, 14, 15), if we may judge from long experience, they certainly would have been insisted on, as a clear evidence of his proper Divinity, and as a Precedent of his right to all the honours of Religious Worship.

It would be mere repetition to dwell longer on the foregoing, and the like texts, some of which have been produced to favour the Athanasian hypothesis, since they have been so often and so fully explained, and shewn to countenance no such Doctrine. And indeed how is it possible they should? how can we reasonably or consci-

* He, indeed, did make use of much the same words with St. Paul,—*God is glorified in him* (in the son of man).—John xiii, 31. And a great deal, no doubt, has been built on such expressions, without considering that they are *figurative*, or *allusive*, as has been just shewn above, by the instance in St. Paul; and, most probably, refer to the Glory which would redound to God, and also to His Ministers, from the perfect Obedience of Christ, even unto Death, in the cause of Truth; and from the consequent propagation of the Gospel.

entiously believe, that the Apostles, in their writings, could mean, in the least, to falsify their chief and clearest Precept; or that our great Master should overthrow, by his own discourses; the very *first Principles* he declares he was expressly sent to confirm or inculcate; namely, *the belief of ONE God, and his merciful Salvation of Mankind by his Messiah**.

Clear as these articles of our faith appear, the opinions which have been, and still are, entertained of the *Person* of our Redeemer, are, unhappily, as various and inconsistent as upon any subject whatsoever: some persisting, in defiance of the plainest evidence, to affirm *that he must be Almighty God himself*; which utterly destroys the possibility of his being the long promised *Messenger of the Covenant, the Mediator, &c.*; and flatly opposes his own express declara-

* "It stands upon record in his gospel, *as the sum thereof, that he taught the worship of the Lord God (of heaven and earth) and of him only;—and that to know him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he sent, was eternal life.*"—Bishop Chandler's *Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies*, second edition, p. 301.

Those mysterious Doctrines, which have been sometimes called the *Distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity*, do not, in fact, appear to belong to it.

tions*: whilst many have lowered him to the other extreme, maintaining him to have been

* See Matt. xi, 25, 26; John v, 31, 36, 37; viii, 18. The Contradictions and absurdities which follow from the above *Opinion* (namely, that Christ is God, notwithstanding they are incessantly and expressly *Contradistinguished* in the New Testament, as again, Acts iii, 13; Rom. xvi, 27; 1-Thess. i, 9, 10, *et passim*); have been so often pointed out, that it is painful to be obliged to multiply such observations. It is making him, *at the same time*, the *Principal* and the *Messenger*;—*Sent by God* (as he so frequently declares), and yet *God himself*; it supposes him to give Thanks *to himself*, to *Pray to himself*, to call upon *himself* for Aid, &c.—See Mark xiv, 23; John xvii, throughout; Heb. v, 7, 8, &c.

St. Paul informs us, that our Redeemer “passed into the “Heavens, where he remains at the right hand of *God*, as “our *Mediator* and *Intercessor*.”—Rom. viii, 34; Heb. iv, 14; vii, 25, &c. Moreover, he is called the *Apostle* and *High Priest of our Profession*.—Heb. iii, 1; x, 21; a *Minister*, Rom. xv, 8; Heb. viii, 2; and in Luke xiii, 33, he styles himself a *Prophet*. Titles all incompatible with his being *God*. As are likewise his following denominations; *The first-born of every Creature*.—Col. i, 15. *The beginning of the Creation of God*.—Rev. iii, 14. (Both these passages may, perhaps, allude to Christ’s being the Beginning or *Head* of the New moral Creation, and, under that Dispensation, *the first-born from the dead* (Col. i, 18) *to die no more*). Christ is represented, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as being in the presence of *God*, continually Officiating as our *High Priest*: And whether we understand this *Office* in a *figurative* or a *literal* sense, it must be totally inapplicable to the *Most high God*.—See Prideaux’s *Connex.*, eighth edition, vol. i,

only a great and virtuous Man, uninspired, and destitute of any supernatural powers*. We shall not attempt to reconcile Opinions so widely different (the last of which contradicts plain Fact), but must here again confess our surprise, with respect to the *first*. Although it is asserted in Scripture, and appears from Analogy consonant to Reason, that there are progressive classes of Celestial Beings, excelling each other in degrees of Dignity, Power, and Knowledge, inconceivable by us;—yet we find *many* who are not contented that the blessed Person above should be *only* the Son of God (as he is denominated in Scripture, in a very peculiar sense);

p. 383. To call God a *Priest* or an *High Priest*, in any sense, would be the grossest absurdity.

Bishop *Chandler*, in explaining the Prophecy of Mal. iii, 1, observes, that, "He (Christ) is the same person, who " from the dignity of his person is called Lord, and from " his Office, *Angel of the Covenant*: and who must, therefore, be distinguished from God that speaks, whose *Angel* " he is, and whose vengeance (upon the unbelieving Jews) " he executes."—*Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies*, p. 54.

* Thus many held Christ to have been only a great and wise Philosopher; acknowledging the singular beauty and strength of his doctrines, but presumptuously discrediting all Miracles *whatsoever*, supposing them utterly inconsistent and impossible. Such opinions now require no serious confutation.

next in Glory and Power to the Almighty himself; Elevated for *his perfect Obedience*, above the most exalted Hierarchies! (Phil. ii, 8, 9). *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy fellows*—Heb. i, 9*: but, dissatisfied with his

* Without diminishing our just ideas of his Exaltation, we may conceive that the distance between him and the MOST HIGH may be still Immense. The words quoted above, lead us forcibly to this conclusion.

The Evidence from Scripture on this head, as has been seen, is distinct and indisputable. Christ (whatever might have been his pristine Nature and Dignity) was considered, by the Apostles, as the *Angel* or *Messenger* of God. This can hardly be doubted. St. Paul, for instance, could have no other conception when he said to the Galatians, *ye received me as an angel (or Messenger) of God, even as Christ Jesus*.—Gal. iv, 14.

Now, though we may so justly contemplate with joy the glorious Elevation of our Lord, and consider him as the Chief and most illustrious Delegate of Heaven; though we acknowledge him to be (by the kind Providence of God) our *Deliverer*, our *great Teacher*, our *High Priest*, and *Intercessor*; and obediently trust in him *as such*; yet, doth this oblige us to place him on an *Equality* with the *Divine Being*;—with *his God and our God*? Such a presumption would ever appear unwarrantable and irrational. Neither surely can we with sufficient safety make him (as is done) an equal Object of Religious Adoration; since our sacred Records teach us, and he our Great Master (whose Example we are

Greatness in this unspeakable *Exaltation*, they must either believe him to be *even* the Most HIGH, or give up all confidence in his Power, or Faith in his Doctrines. From which Opinion it would follow, that the SUPREME, the All-glorious LORD and CREATOR of the Universe, on Whom the very Being of All things *Incessantly* depends; Who filleth Heaven and Earth *eternally* with his Presence, and Whose mode of Existence and Nature are absolutely *Unchangeable*, and *Impassible*; or, as St. Paul expresses himself, *Who only* (in a strict and proper sense) *hath Immortality*; was, nevertheless, not only really or *Personally Imbodied* in a human Frame, but, moreover, made a *Sacrifice**, *by violent*

directed to follow) hath *shewed* us that, *Divine Worship* is the *distinguishing* and *peculiar* Honour, due from *All*, to our *Father who is in Heaven*; and, indeed, is *the ONLY proper means we have to distinguish HIM from all other Beings*.

* Dr. Clarke was deeply sensible of the monstrous Absurdity and Impiety of this Notion, and expresses himself strongly on the point. "Concerning the *Father* (he says); "it would be the Highest Blasphemy to affirm, that He "could possibly have become *Man*; or that He could possibly "have *Suffered* in *Any* Sense, in *Any* Supposition, in *Any* Capacity, in *Any* Circumstance, in *Any* State, or in *Any* Nature *whatsoever*." — Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 98. These reflections are certainly Just and True, and are alone Sufficient to shew the Great and *Natural Superiority* of the FATHER.

hands, for the most corrupt and insignificant of His intellectual *Creatures*:—*Himself* a Sacrifice to appease *Himself**!

Will not some Men yet see and acknowledge the *Impossibility* that the *God of Nature* should *Suffer*, should *Expire*, without *All Nature* *Suffering*, and instantly *Perishing* with Him?

No *Inferior* Oblation, however, it has been said, would have been at all Adequate. It is much to be feared that such tenets, to say nothing worse of them, expose our extreme vanity and Presumption, rather than demonstrate our attachment to sound Religion, or our attention

* Those who believe *Christ* to be the *Most High God*, will probably apply to his supposed *two* Natures, in order to explain the above Inconsistencies. But then the former Difficulty returns. It appears, that *Two* complete Intelligent Natures, must necessarily imply *Two* distinct Persons, or Intelligent Agents (One of which was *suffering* while the Other was *quiescent*).—*Nestorianism*. See this well illustrated by Mr. Christie, in his *Discourses* (before referred to), p. 82—89.

The Apostle Paul says, that, *since by Man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead*.—1 Cor. xv, 21. This Declaration favours not the notion of *two* natures in our Redeemer: it rather seems to exclude the necessity of such an hypothesis.—See Heb. x, 10.

to the voice of that Reason with which God has been pleased to endue us.

St. Peter seems to have intended to guard us from such errors and perplexities, by recording, with great clearness and simplicity, and in few words, the nature and final purpose of our Saviour's Mission and Doctrine, and his *dependence* on the Deity. *Christ verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the World, but was manifest in these last times for you; Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.*—1 Pet. i, 20, 21. This passage is full of light, explaining many others that are not so much divested of figure.

We are also, in the Acts of the Apostles, informed, as expressly as we can be, from *Whom* our Redeemer derives his exceeding Dignity and Preeminence. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD hath MADE that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*—Acts ii, 36. We here find St. Peter publicly asserting, on a very striking occasion, immediately after the effusion of the holy Spirit, that the *same Person* (Jesus) who had been *Crucified*, was *made both Lord and*

Christ. No intimation given that one part *only* of his Nature was thus dignified, because the other could not be more highly Exalted *. And yet, the Apostle was, most certainly, well quali-

* The *Exaltation* of Christ, after his Resurrection, frequently mentioned in the Acts and other places of the New Testament, and *Predicted* in the Old (as in Isa. lii, 13; Dan. vii, 13, 14), leads us to produce the following explanation of a controverted passage:—At the close of his Ministry, our Lord thus Prays (making no *distinction* concerning his *Nature*).—John xvii, 5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me,—with the glory I had with thee before the world was: i. e. “ which thou hadst destined (or fore-ordained) for me, before “ the world was.”*—See 1 Pet. i, 20, 21, cited above, and Heb. xii, 2. We cannot possibly think that Christ *Prayed* for any Glory which he *then* possessed; Neither perhaps can we properly suppose, that he Prayed only for his future *Personal* Glory; since, indeed, he must have been already well assured of it, from the known Decree, and the repeated Promises of God. Most likely, therefore, as Mr. Lindsey has remarked with peculiar discernment, the *Glory*, which our blessed Lord, at this time, principally supplicated, was of a most benign and generous nature, regarding MANY as well as himself; namely, “ *The successful Propagation of the “ Gospel,*”—The *Glory* of being the Great Instrument of conveying the means of never-ending Happiness to Millions of Millions!—See Lindsey’s *Sequel* to his Apology, p. 239—246, &c.

To those who hold the *Proper Divinity* of Christ (and the *Inseparable Union* of his *two Natures*), his Petition must give rise to an Insurmountable Difficulty; For, *At no Time what-*

fied, and had a fair opportunity to have made so requisite a *Distinction*, if he had known it to be founded. The Artifice of concealing the most Interesting Truths, lest they should *Mislead* (a strange maxim for spiritual teachers!), which was afterwards attributed to the Apostles, could not belong to *them*, nor was it necessary to the Cause they espoused.

The same Apostle, St. Peter, on a subsequent occurrence, testifies to Cornelius and others (Acts x, 38—42), that *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom God had raised up the third day, and shewed openly, to witnesses fore-chosen, who ate and

soever, could he have been *Without* the Highest Glory, if he had been *Equal* with the *Unchangeable* God.

Dr. Clarke's observations, on John xvii, 5, are as follow :
 " If the Son had the Same Claim and Title to Worship, the
 " same Right to all Glory, that the Father himself hath; it
 " could be no more proper for the Son to Pray to the Father
 " to glorify the Son (to glorify him either with new or with
 " ancient Glory), than for the Father to Pray to the Son to
 " glorify the Father. Nor does it at all alter the Case, if
 " we say he prayed only for his human Nature. For still
 " the *Impropriety* will be the same as before: That the Son
 " should Pray to the Father to give to his Human Nature
 " that Glory, which the Son himself had the very SAME
 " Right to have given to it, of his own Authority, as the
 " Father himself had."—Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 484.

drank with him after his Resurrection, was *he* (the *Person*) whom God *had* ordained to be the *Judge of quick and dead*.

Whatsoever Rank and Power our great Deliverer now holds in the Universe, it is plain, therefore, that he possesses them in *subordination* to HIM, from *Whom*, he himself declares, *he received all things*.—Matt. xi, 27; John xvii, 7. Moreover his present Authority, and *Spiritual Ministry*, we learn, are held for a *determined Period*; for it is written that he is at last to *deliver them up* to their Almighty *Giver*, *even to the Father*; that *God may be all in all*.—1 Cor. xv, 24, 27, 28*.

This important circumstance, which is asserted by St. Paul with great solemnity, is surely sufficient of itself to shew the *Inequality* be-

* “Although we must always suppose, that he will for ever possess a *Reward*, suitable to his distinguished merit and obedience.”—Mr. Christie’s *Discourses*, p. 105.

“In one Sense, *the kingdom of Christ will have no end*, as the laws of righteousness, which he has delivered, will continue to be the *Rule* of conduct to his followers, and the source of their happiness through all time; and therefore (2 Pet. i, 11) it is called *the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*.”—Mr. Lindsey’s *Sequel*, p. 79.

tween Christ and *the Supreme Lord of Heaven and Earth*. Nevertheless, the ingenuous and unprejudiced Reader will observe, that while we are endeavouring to maintain the hallowed Prerogatives of *our Heavenly Father*, it is not ungratefully designed to diminish the real Dignity and excellence of our kind and beloved Redeemer: far from so impotent, so dangerous an attempt against him, who rests in the bosom of Omnipotence; it is meant to shew no more than our Saviour himself and his Apostles also have forcibly impressed;—that the Existence and Power of our *Great Creator* are *alone* UNDERIVED and IMMUTABLE; His Glory and Benevolence UNEQUALLED; His Dominion UNBOUNDED and ETERNAL.

By inculcating these great Truths, our Saviour, and his inspired Followers, clearly pointed out the Object of Adoration, and strictly adhered to all the preceding Revelations which regarded the Deity, as it is natural to conclude they would. The *external* modes of Worship may be altered or relinquished, as we find they have been by Divine authority, but the *Proper Object* of Religious Worship must *for ever* be the *very Same*: The *One* only God who was Acknowledged and Adored by Moses and the

Prophets, must be, Identically, also, the *Only true God* of the Christians*;—there can be no possible Change in a Being absolutely *Immutable*. Neither can it be said with any colour from the Scriptures, nor with any semblance of Reason, that God (or the Object of Adoration) was revealed to Moses and the Prophets, *Imperfectly* or *Incompletely*. What appearance of verity is there, that the *Almighty* on that awful occasion (as on many other occasions), when He proclaimed the true *Object* of Divine Worship (Exod. xx), and spake of Himself as a *single Being* or *Person*, and *LORD of All* (xix, 5), did thereby Conceal from his faithful Servants the Essential knowledge of his Intimate Union with *two other Divine Persons, Equal with Himself* in *Perfection, Dominion, and Power*; and, consequently, *Equally* entitled to the Highest Worship, and the *Marked attention* of All Mankind in all Ages†?—Surely the Spirit of that man

* Namely, *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.
—See Acts iii, 13; 2 Tim. i, 3. There is not the least *Vestige*, in the Old Testament, of the Jews having Worshipped a *Trinity of Persons* in the Divine Substance.

† As to the Notion, that *Three real Persons*, or *distinct Intelligent Agents, Equal* to each other in All *Divine Perfections*, and *Dominion*, make only *One God*, or *Supreme Governor*,—this Notion is so directly and *openly Inconsistent*, that it requires no small degree of Credulity to believe that

must be waxed gross, that doth not tremble at the Ideas which even the Mention of such opinions unavoidably suggests.

It is, therefore, exceedingly wonderful how such opinions should ever have maintained any hold in the minds of serious and intelligent men. If we collect again (and it cannot be done too often on this occasion) a few of the plain and emphatical Expressions of the Old Testament, and likewise some of the New, their united force may, possibly, demonstrate the difficulty and danger that we throw ourselves into, when we depart, in any manner, from our obedience to such solemn Injunctions; in which, it is evident, no more than *One Divine Person* is intended. *I am the LORD your God.—There is none like ME.—Thou shalt worship no other God.—The LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords.—He is thy praise, and He is thy God.—Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, Him shalt thou serve, and to Him shalt thou cleave, and swear by His name. He that sacrificeth unto any God, save unto the Lord ONLY, he shall be*

any man ever could seriously maintain it. “*Many Supreme Governors* (however supposed to be Inseparable) cannot be “*One Supreme Governor*, because it is an *express Contradiction in itself*, as well as entirely void of all Foundation in “*Scripture.*”—Dr. Clarke, Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 519.

utterly destroyed.—And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. Again: I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear HIM who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear HIM.—For my Father is greater than I.—My Father is greater than All.—Why callest thou me good? none is good, save One, that is God.—And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great commandment.—When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray TO THY FATHER who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—The hour cometh, and now is, when the True Worshippers shall worship THE FATHER in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship HIM.*

Here is a minute assemblage of the Declarations and Precepts of God, of Moses, and of Christ. They are in exact harmony, and as per-

* The One law-giver, Who is able to save, and to destroy.
—James iv, 12.

fectly clear as harmonious: but it appears altogether impossible that they should ever be properly reconciled with the Athanasian doctrine: the very attempt to do it, leads us into dangerous perversions, and fills us with the most distressing perplexity. It would be well, therefore, if men whose Minds are illumined with true Wisdom, and who, on mature reflection, feel no Danger in the *received* Doctrine, when it is fairly discussed before the impartial Tribunal of Scripture and sound Reason;—it would be perfectly congenial with Christian Charity, if they would with temper and perspicuity reconcile, if it be possible, the hitherto insuperable Difficulties found in *that* Doctrine, which have, for Ages, shaken the tranquillity and the Belief of Multitudes (and from which the Unitarian faith is, at least comparatively, *Free*);—that the spirits of those who are anxious to hold the Truth in righteousness may be in Peace.

Upon the whole. It appears from an Equitable construction of the *Scriptures*, that the LORD our GOD is *absolutely One*. That, in general, what is *therein* termed, the *Holy Spirit* (when the *Person* of the Deity is not intended), means no less than the *Spiritual Emanations*, or the Awful *Effective Power* of the FATHER

ALMIGHTY, proceeding from *Him**; and in the Gospel times, for glorious purposes, communicating the most precious Gifts to Christ and his Apostles†:—*Virtue* ineffable of the HIGHEST! which pervades the Universe, and *acts continually* all around Us, though, perhaps, but seldom.

* See Luke xi, 13; John xv, 26; Acts viii, 19, 20; 1 Cor. vi, 19.

† Our Saviour, after his *Ascension*, is declared to have dispensed these divine gifts to his faithful Followers on Earth: having then again received the Power of so doing from the FATHER (Acts ii, 33),—*being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear*—See also Luke xxiv, 49; John xiv, 16. This again shews from *Whom* those wonderful Powers were *Derived*. We therefore very properly address our Prayers to *God* (through Christ) for all such Spiritual Assistances (though *now* of a very inferior kind), and not to Christ who acts under Him.

The *Spirit of Christ*, is a phrase found in the Epistles. This Expression, nevertheless, in the following Text, properly alludes to the same Prophetic Spirit which was shed upon our Lord himself at his Baptism, and with which *God* had Inspired the ancient Prophets.—1 Pet. i, 11. *Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ, which was in them* (the Prophets), *did signify*, &c. Here Bishop Chandler has happily introduced two explanatory words, which seem to give the true meaning of this passage;—“*Searching what, and what manner of time, the Spirit which*” *Propheesied of Christ did signify, when It testified before-*

perceptibly within us. That this Supreme and most Holy LORD GOD, is the only proper Object of all Religious Adoration; and that we are directed to Pray and give Thanks to Him alone,

"hand (i. e. by the Prophets) the sufferings of Christ," &c.—Defence of Christianity, Introduction, p. xi.

We find, according to Acts ii, 33, cited above, that Christ received the holy Spirit (or *Divine Powers*) from the Father, even after his Exaltation in heaven; so that the *holy Spirit* (when communicated again from Christ to his Followers) can only be called *the Spirit of Christ* in a *secondary* sense: and thus we must understand the *like* phraseology in other places.—See 2 Kings ii, 9, 15. In Rom. viii, 9, the words *if any man have not the spirit of Christ, &c.*, signify, if men have not "a *Moral likeness* to him," *they are (then) None of his.*—Dr. Clarke.

The *Miraculous* gifts of the holy Spirit, appear to have terminated in the *Apostolic Age*: The Infant age of the Gospel absolutely required them; at which time, Christ was empowered to attend to the growing Church (after his *Ascension*) in a very full and particular manner; as clearly appears in the *Acts*. By his *Intercession* he obtained for the Apostles, as he had promised (John xiv, 16), and for the first Converts, the Extraordinary gifts of the holy Spirit, which were bestowed on them Abundantly. This not only sufficiently Confirmed his Messiahship and Resurrection, but also Promoted the great and final Purpose (comprising the most invaluable blessings to Mankind), namely, Obedience to his *Commandments*, and *that the FATHER* (from whom they Originated) *might be glorified in*, or rather, *through the Son.*—See John xiv, 13—15.

through the Mediation and in the Name of our blessed Redeemer and Master Jesus Christ.

That this was the habitual Practice of the Apostles, and their *immediate* Disciples, is most evident throughout the New Testament*, and indeed was directly encouraged by our Saviour

* And it appears to have been the general practice for a long period after the first preaching of the Gospel. *Justin Martyr*, about an hundred years after Christ, declares, "that there was no nation of men, whether Greeks or Barbarians, who had not learned to offer prayers and thank-givings to the Father and Maker of all, in the Name of Jesus who was crucified."—*Dr. Fleetwood's Life of Christ*, Introduction, p. 32. And certainly nothing can be more Distinguishing, more Glorious, and truly Honourable to our Redeemer, than this Practice of making a Solemn use of his Name, in all our addresses to Almighty God; Which several of the Ancients justly conceived to be *Honouring the Son in the Second Place*. And it is indeed a *proper and just acknowledgment of the PRE-EMINENCE of Christ* above all other Beings, *God himself wholly Excepted*. This is the Divinity (if it may be so called) which, as the Scriptures represent to us, our Lord Jesus Christ most worthily enjoys; even that Elevation and Glory which his God and Father was pleased to confer upon him; and which were *Preordained* for his matchless Purity and Obedience (Acts ii, 36; Philipp. ii, 8—11; compare Isa. liii, 7, 12, herein the Prophets and the Apostles certainly accord): and the *Exaltation*, as has been said, is unspeakable. These Principles, if maturely weighed, would go a great way towards satisfying the scruples of many.

himself, in his final Instructions on this head. *Ye have not chosen me, saith he, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my Name, he may give it you.*—John xv, 16. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name**; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—John xvi, 23, 24. The positive directions of St. Paul, accordingly run as follows, and are so clear that they cannot be misunderstood; and it may be justly observed, that the being allowed to address ourselves to the *Supreme Being* himself, on any proper occasion, must be esteemed as one of the most inestimable and most comfortable privileges that any creature can possess.

* HITHERTO have ye asked nothing in MY name. And again (Ib. ver. 23): *In that day ye shall ask ME nothing.—Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, &c.* These words of *Christ* to his devout Followers, contain fresh evidence that he cannot be *God*, cannot be *equal to the Father*: If he were, neither of these Declarations could have been made. Surely, of all others, the Unitarian Faith is the least necessitated to screen itself under *Perversions* of the sacred Text.

In every thing by Prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.—Phil. iv, 6.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Eph. v, 20.

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, by him.—Col. iii, 17.

*That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God; even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. xv, 6 *; see 1 Pet. iv, 11.*

* See also John xiv, 13; Acts xii, 5; Ibid. xxiv, 14; Rom. i, 8, 9; Ibid. x, 1; Ibid. xvi, 27; 1 Cor. i, 4; Ibid. xiv, 25; 2 Cor. i, 3; Eph. iii, 14; Philipp. iv, 20; Col. i, 3, 12; 1 Thess. i, 2; Ibid. ii, 13; Ibid. v, 23; 2 Tim. i, 3; 1 Pet. ii, 5, &c. It may be here reasonably asked, How doth it happen, that in all these Examples and solemn directions for *Prayer* and *Thanksgiving* (and in many others which might be produced), God *the Father is alone* supplicated and adored? Why is the *holy Ghost* thus entirely unnoticed? The answer is, indeed, short and plain. *Christ* and his *Apostles*, it appears, never thought of distinguishing *positively* God's holy Spirit from God *himself*.

In some forms like the above, mention is indeed made of the *Spirit*, as in Rom. xv, 30; Philipp. iii, 3; but, it is remarkable, *never* as a *distinct* Object of Prayer or Thanks-

What form of words can possibly be more full or declarative? Is it not then very hard to

giving. The words Πνευμα αγιον, or *holy Spirit*, seem, therefore, to have been often used by our Saviour and his Apostles, as a *comprehensive* mode of expressing the divine communications of God (who is consequently always understood), His power, influence, grace, and various Spiritual gifts, being all frequently implied in that Scripture-phrase.

After all: should we Suppose that by the *Holy Ghost* is really meant, a *mighty Spiritual Being*, sent (John xiv, 16, 26) or employed by the most High God (or even acting *with* Him), yet there is *no Precedent whatsoever* (that we can discover) *throughout the New Testament* for the *invoking*, or *giving Glory* to such *distinct Agent*:—this omission must appear astonishing, and utterly inexplicable to all of the *Athanasian* persuasion.

St. Luke has recorded a Form of Glorification or Praise, offered to the Deity by the *Angels* or *heavenly Host*.—Luke ii, 13, 14.—*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, &c.* As this Form is allowed to be genuine, it is difficult to account Why men have not followed so secure an Example: since those Celestial Beings certainly must have known precisely what is right on such occasions; and the instance they gave was momentous, because this *heavenly Doxology* was uttered on a memorable occasion, and in the hearing of men.

In fine. That which seems further to confirm the necessity of considering the Holy Ghost as no other than the Spirit or *Power* of the *Almighty himself*, is, the declaration made by St. Matthew (i, 18, 20), and likewise by St. Luke (i, 35), *that our Saviour was born of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost.*

conceive, how the same *truly Orthodox* mode of Worship could injure the very same religion now? *By him, therefore*, who appears before the Throne of Grace for us, *let us offer the sacrifice of Praise to GOD continually.*—Heb. xiii, 15. These Precepts of the Apostle are, indeed, wholly incompatible with the notion that *Christ* is the Most High God; but they are no other than the conclusive Directions of *our Saviour himself*; and are free from all perplexity or uncertainty. And if we Regard him as our Great Instructor and Deliverer, *through the tender mercy of our GOD*: if we reflect on his present glorious Dignity, and extensive Authority: if we consider him as the Head of the Universal Church; as our anointed High Priest; and more especially as our only *Intercessor*, and as *the well-beloved Son of God*; we shall perceive the great Propriety and Wisdom of the Rule, which encourages us to offer up our

Now if the Holy Ghost were *not* the POWER of the Highest, but the *Third Person* of a Trinity, *distinct* or *different* from the *Father*, then would Christ be rather the *Son* of the *Third Person*, and not of the *Father*, who is the *First*. But he is generally called the *Son of God the Father* in the Scriptures, even with respect to his *Humanity*, and *never* of the *Holy Ghost*. When he is spoken of as the *Son of Man*, it naturally refers to his *Mother's* lineage from the House of *David*.

Prayers and Thanksgivings, in his Auspicious Name, **TO THE SUPREME LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.** If we deviate from this Precept, we then wander from the Path which is so benevolently and directly pointed out to us, and enlightened by the clearest rays from heaven.

We are, therefore, humbly of opinion, that if our Doctrines were reduced to their *original* Purity and Simplicity; did we freely and unequivocally acknowledge with the Apostle, *that the head of Christ is GOD* (1 Cor. xi, 3):—these necessary and important steps would, in a great measure, destroy our most bitter Controversies; render our holy Religion more generally understood and believed; and prepare it for that *Universal* Promulgation and Acceptance, for which it was so benevolently intended by its Great and Blessed Teacher: and which (as it has been long foretold), in Defiance of the subtlest powers of Darkness and Delusion, will finally be Accomplished.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the Works of Darkness, and let us put on the armour of Light.—Rom. xiii, 12:

Praying with the Apostle: *That the God of*

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Him.—Eph. i, 17*.

Then shall we, happily for ourselves, hasten the fulfilling of that ancient Prophecy: *And the LORD shall be King over all the Earth: in that day shall there be ONE LORD, and his NAME ONE.*—Zech. xiv, 9.

UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH, BY CHRIST JESUS, THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. *Amen.*—Eph. iii, 21.

* It is submitted to the Reader, whether this short but comprehensive *Oraison* of the Apostle, doth not contain a direct *Confirmation* of every Position of consequence, that has been advanced in this Tract. The Supreme Being is solemnly acknowledged to be *The God* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *the Father of Glory*;—and the Spirit is supplicated as a Divine Gift from *Him*.



POSTSCRIPT.

THE *Distinction of Two Natures in Christ*, being the common Means used by *Orthodox Writers*, to solve the many Difficulties which arise in the *New Testament* against Their System of the *Son's Equality with the Father*; it may be useful, therefore, to add the following Observations.

When, in Scripture, *God* is declared to be *the Head of Christ*: When our Lord says, *The Son can do nothing of himself: My Father is greater than I*, &c., the meaning is (say the Writers abovementioned), that *the Father* is indeed *Superior* with respect to Christ's *Human Nature*, but not with respect to his *Divine*. Now, This amounts to the very same as to say, that *the Father* is *Greater* than the *human Person* of Christ, but not *Greater* than his *Divine Person*; Which is directly supposing *Christ* to consist of *Two Persons*, the one *very Different* from the other. For the Terms, *Divine Nature*, and *Human Nature*, being directly *Ap-*

plied to, or Spoken of Intelligent Agents; those Terms, therefore, Include in their Signification respectively (if they Signify any thing Determinate), a 'Divine Person, or a Human Person.

If it be affirmed, that the *Divine Nature* and the *Human Nature*, are so *Blended* together as to make only *One Person* in *Christ**; Then it will follow Necessarily, that as the Pronoun *I* (in John xiv, 28), includes Christ's *Whole Person*, he there expressly Acknowledges the *Father* to be *Greater* than he is, in his *Highest Capacity*: And again, John x, 29.

If by the Term, *Person*, is not meant an *Intelligent Agent*, it should be told us *What* is meant: Otherwise we may, for aught we know, build our Faith on *Non-Entities*; on uncertain *Metaphysical* Notions, concerning Which, the *Scripture* is entirely Silent. As to the Word, *Nature*, if it be used (as some of Dr. Clarke's Opponents seem to have done) to signify Something *Abstracted* from *Person*, or *Substance*, Then Nobody can possibly tell *What* it means. "*Humanity and Divinity, Human Nature and* "*Divine Nature*, which, being [*in Themselves*,

* *Scripture* always speaks of *Christ* as being *One Person only*.

“i. e. when considered as being *Distinct* from
 “the *Substances* to which they belong] really
 “nothing but Abstract *Terms* or *Notions*, have
 “yet frequently been spoken of, with the utmost
 “*Absurdity*, as *Beings* or *Persons*, either *Act-*
 “*ing* or *Suffering*.—Dr. S. Clarke.

The Scheme of *Two Natures* in Christ, was adopted pretty early (to support the Opinion of his *Equality* with the *Father*), but it was sometimes thought to be very weakly applied. *Gregory Nazianzen*, about the latter end of the *Fourth Century*, treats it with great Indifference. “To affirm (says he) that *the Father* is “*Greater* than *Christ*, considered in his *Human* “*Nature*, is True, indeed, but of no great Moment; For what Wonder is it, that *God* “should be *Greater* than a *Man*?”—*Orat.* 36.

There is not much doubt but that the foregoing Treatise will be found satisfactory to Many, with respect to the *Principal Object* contended for, namely, *The Absolute Unity, Supremacy, and the Unequalled Majesty of GOD, even the Father; The Great Parent, and merciful Preserver of all Beings whatsoever*. Those who contend simply for the Truth on this Momentous Article (Which we have drawn from the clear and general stream of *Scripture Testi-*

mony, and not from single or obscure Passages), will, if they have at all studied the human Mind, and are disposed to Charity, readily resign Points of less Importance*, or of doubtful Authority, to every Person's private Judgment of the Gospel meaning, for the sake of Christian Peace. An Agreement in *all* Points is not to be expected: But let the *First Principle* of Revealed Religion be Restored among *Christians* in all its Original Simplicity; as *Christ*, the *Prophets*, and the *Apostles* Delivered it;—It will then be found Safe, Firm, and perfectly Intelligible.

Some encouragement there is to hope, that this most desirable Event will take place; as the *Truth* of that Great Principle is partially Acknowledged, even by our Opponents Themselves (though they do not pursue their Concession to its proper Consequences); For it is Confessed by *Trinitarians*, that the *Almighty Father* is the *Fountain of Divinity*. Now, to argue from their own Hypothesis, by the *Fountain of*

* Concerning the *Preexistence* of *Christ*;—it is an Article left for others to determine upon for Themselves. Whether *Christ Preexisted* or *Not*, his Divine Precepts and Doctrines, his present Illustrious Exaltation, and intimate Connexion with the Church, are the Points which the *Christian* should, and will principally regard.

Divinity, must be meant (if any thing be meant), the *Intelligent Source*, or *Cause* of the Existence and Divinity of the *Son* and the *Holy Spirit*. After such a Confession, it is not easy to conceive, how the *Perfect Equality* of the *Three Persons* can possibly be Maintained. It has been said, that *They* are *Equal* in Dignity and Power with respect to all Created Beings. But this is evidently shifting or evading the Main Question, which is, Whether we have any Sufficient Authority to believe Them to be *Equal* with respect to *Themselves* ?

The FATHER (all Acknowledge) is absolutely *Uncaused* ; but the *Son* cannot be said to Exist *Independent* of a *Cause* or *Efficient*. This will hardly be denied, and indeed (one should think) there requires no further Proof of Their great *Inequality*.

The Christians, who lived *before* the Time of the *Nicene Council* (and who believed the *Father Alone* to be *Self-Existent*), must have perceived this Consequence ; for, if we may credit their own Writings, *They* had not proceeded so far as to maintain an *Equality*. They all, on the contrary, held the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, to be *Inferior* to the *Father*, indeed vastly *Inferior* to *Him*. *Origen* says,

“ *The Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, are more Excelled by the Father, than he (the Son) and the Holy Spirit excel other Things.*”—See *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*, by Dr. Priestley, vol. ii, chap. iv; wherein this Zealous and very able Writer, has produced many other express Testimonies to the like purpose, from *Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Novatian, Arnobius, &c.* And in the Works of the Learned and Pious Dr. S. Clarke, may also be seen numberless Passages from those and other *Ancient Christian Writers*, which positively declare the same Opinion: So that the *Great Antiquity* of the *present Orthodoxy*, can by no means be boasted of; which Consideration alone, some (who are fond of ancient Authorities) may think, is enough to shake its Foundation. But the Appeal, with *Protestants*, should lay to the *Scriptures*.

A truly Pious and Virtuous Life is above all *Speculation*. Nevertheless it is become *Absolutely Necessary*, as Opinions now stand, that Mankind should use their best and most earnest *Endeavours* to satisfy themselves,—Whether God be *One Person Only*, or *More than One*; —Whether there are *More Objects of Divine Worship* than *One*; Or, Whether the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be the ONLY True God, Supreme over All, and the Only Proper Object of Prayer, and of all Divine or Supreme Worship, Through Jesus Christ our Mediator : And, more Especially, it should be well Considered, What is the real Doctrine (stripped of all Human Inventions) on These Fundamental Articles, Contained in That Revelation which we are taught to Believe came from God Himself. Otherwise, without these Momentous Points being first Settled, all Religion must be Confusion ; and, consequently, the most sincere and Pious Persons may easily be Misled in their Religious Duties, Misplace their Principal Dependence, and Direct their Solemn Worship to Wrong and Improper Objects.

A
L E T T E R

FROM

THE AUTHOR,

TO

H I S G R A C E J O H N

L O R D A R C H B I S H O P O F C A N T E R B U R Y .

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD.—JEREMIAH ix, 24.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your FATHER who is in heaven.—MATT. v, 16.

Ille verò (Christus) exhibuit Deo fidem; Docuit enim quòd Unus Deus sit, eumque Solum coli oportere; nec unquam se ipse Deum dixit: quia non servâsset fidem, si missus, ut Deos tolleret, et unum assereret, induceret Alium præter Unum.

LACTANTIUS DE VERA SAPIENTIA.

THIRD EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

TO

HIS GRACE JOHN

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MY LORD;

ALTHOUGH the Principles contained in my Endeavour to Elucidate the *Unity of God* are opposed to a long prevailing Opinion in the Church over which you Preside, yet, I humbly presume, your Grace has not determined to refuse your attention to Arguments, that are seriously and temperately offered against that Opinion, especially when they are fairly brought from those very Records on which it is supposed to be founded. The Respect I feel for your sacred Function, secures me from giving you the least Intentional Offence. I have no Symptoms of such a design in my heart. And, therefore, I flatter myself, that you will believe me, my

Lord, when I declare, that nothing but an earnest desire to support the Truth, on an Article of the utmost Importance to Mankind (in doing which I have taken example from *very high Authority*), and to shew the agreement of Scripture to that Light which God himself implanted in us, hath prompted me to open myself to your Grace and to the world. I have thus discharged (certainly without any regard to worldly Interests) what I have conceived to be my Duty ; and the issue is cheerfully resigned to Providence.

It will appear evident, I hope, to every unbiassed Mind, that the Tract foregoing, contains not a presumptuous attempt to injure or to alter any part of the Religion of Christ, but that it is expressly designed to forward its GENERAL reception on its own Foundations ; and to promote that Union and Peace in the Church, which are alone to be expected from a *strict* adherence to the revealed Will of God. The leading Principles maintained in that Tract, and in some other late Publications, are taken from no mortal Source ; and they will, I believe, be found to include the very means by which the Christian Faith may be reduced to its primeval simplicity, relieved from confusion,

and defended effectually from the shrewd objections of many of its Adversaries*.

THE indolent custom (followed by many who are blessed with noble Advantages) of sitting down contented through life, with the most prevalent or the most fashionable Doctrines, without ever investigating their Truth and Consistency, must be deemed a mean prostitution of common Sense;—a Prostitution which has continued Error and Idolatry from generation to generation. I beg leave, therefore, to observe, that the zealous Inquirers into the true Object of Divine Worship, are sometimes, very irrationally, accused of an overweening Curiosity; it is said, that they do wrong in disturbing the Minds of themselves and others, by searching into Mysteries which are not on a level with our Understanding. Now without entering into any

* It may be here remarked (but it is not a singular instance), that the late *Bishop Chandler*, in his successful *Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies*, drops all discordant *Unintelligible tenets*, and adopts, almost without exception, much the same easy Principles that any *Unitarian* Christian would now use on a like occasion.—See the Four last Sections of the Bishop's Work. In truth, it will ever be found a hard task to Defend Christianity, on opposite Principles, against Unbelievers; as any one may experience who will try it.

formal argument against this reasoning, a very plain answer may be given. That, if we would settle our Faith on substantial grounds, we must both *Search* and *Think*: and that when those *Mysteries* are perpetually brought forward in the Church, and warmly defended out of it, not as points merely Speculative, but as Articles of *Belief* (regulating a *Practice*) necessary to Salvation, we very naturally endeavour to comprehend them; and indeed they then become of too Important a nature to suffer the truly Religious Mind to remain Indifferent about them. Thus, Men, seriously disposed, are unavoidably driven, by regard to their inward quiet, to seek for satisfaction to themselves; and to take refuge from the distractions of Controversy, under the peaceful safeguard of the Bible:—Not, however, rejecting the assistance of learned and pious Teachers. What we have reason to lament is, that the sacred Writings have been violently wrested into mystic senses, which very often have no place but in the Imagination; and favourite Opinions have been urged and defended, by bold assertions without Proof, or by deductions extorted without any appearance of sound Argument;—without even any due regard to the allowed signification of words, to grammar, or the general Design of the Scriptures:—It is unlikely that any System, not in opposition

so *that* Design, would ever require such very extraordinary measures for its support.

As these strained and irregular modes of construction are never likely to fix our Religious Principles on a firm basis, I have endeavoured to confine myself to the most obvious Sense of Revelation, and it is my consolation, that I can humbly and openly appeal to the Great Judge of All, that, if I have erred in the search of Him and his Truths, I have not erred *Wilfully*. I could not possibly have sought my own Interest in so doing. In designedly trying to mislead others, I should certainly undermine my own tranquillity, without the smallest prospect of advantage; and surely no man of common discernment will be charged with such consummate folly. The Point I have contended for, is, indeed, of such infinite Importance, that, I readily own, I found myself unable, in the prosecution of my endeavours, to free myself from the deepest anxiety and fear, lest I should sometimes grossly mistake, and give offence in a matter wherein my future Peace and Happiness are so directly concerned. But I humbly rely on the Mercy and Compassion of God, in whom I have trusted and not in myself.

Conscientious motives prevailed on me not to conceal the result of my inquiries. To free

others from perplexity, as well as myself, and to prove by clear deductions, that the Bible doth not enforce an article of Faith repugnant to our inward suggestions, but that It is filled with confirmations of that first Principle, *the Unity of God*, which appears to be a Truth harmonizing with human Reason:—These have been my chief wishes and designs. Yet I am convinced, my Lord, with Yourself and others, that even the stedfast Belief of this Great and leading Principle, and the consequences deducible from it, will avail us but little, unless the Moral Excellencies, which should arise from that Belief, are put in *Practice*. True Charity, Piety, Virtue, Integrity, are essentials in true Religion, and the stipulated means of our acceptance with God.

THE History of Europe, as your Lordship well knows, records the most melancholy Proofs how far Men, in support of their several Systems, have departed from Christian Charity. Human Nature shudders at the Relation, and is relieved alone by reflecting on that Light and Liberality which, by the favour of God, now pervade and Dignify the Minds of Men almost throughout Christendom.

The Maxim, which so long prevailed, that the Gift of God, our *distinguishing Faculty*, is a

Guide by no means to be trusted in our Religious researches ;—this fatal Maxim, craftily taught, and too readily imbibed in Superstitious Ages, was apparently calculated for other purposes than those of true Piety ;—It dethroned *Reason* ; and the Blessings and Promises of the Gospel were then secreted in the hands of Tyranny, Pride, and Avarice, or consigned to the blind and merciless Authority of *Zeal without Knowledge*.

These interested endeavours to shut out the light of Reason, or to render it useless, in a great measure succeeded ; and, in consequence, an almost universal Darkness overspread the Christian World ; which has dissipated but by slow degrees. Surprising as it may appear on reflection to some, it seems to have been but lately allowed, that a Man can neither, in fact, be *compelled to Believe*, nor can possibly *Believe as he pleases* ; but that, if he Thinks at all, *his real Belief must flow from the dictates of his own Conscience* ; a Tribunal which no Mortal Power can command ! This is an everlasting *Truth* ; and it is from Men's Ignorance of it, or their want of attention to it, that all the shameful Cruelties of Persecution, on account of Religious opinions, have ever taken their rise. It is not possible for *Ignorance* to expose itself

more ridiculously, than in manifesting a Belief, that any human Authority can *force* or *subdue* the *Consciences* of Men, since it certainly is not in the power of themselves to do it if they would. The efforts of Conscience may, indeed, be *resisted* by our own baseness and impiety, but cannot be finally suppressed. Whenever, therefore, this has been attempted (as it has been too often) the Trial has universally ended as all trials must do that are made to effect Impossibilities. But Mankind, as they become more enlightened, become not only more reasonable, but, very naturally, more Merciful also; and those Enormities which were formerly committed by Bigots of all Persuasions, and which we now read of with equal horror and astonishment; are never likely, by the Goodness of God, to infest the Earth again.

The best resolutions to *act* according to the convincement of the heart, have been checked severely by *Persecution*, or by the fear of it; but without any likelihood of producing a real *Conversion*. When that Excellent Man, Archbishop *Cranmer*, harrassed by his merciless enemies, and overcome, for a time, by the weakness of human Nature, signed an Abjuration of those Principles which Reason and Reflection had taught him to adopt; how little did

the Terrors of the most revengeful Barbarity and misguided Zeal, at last Avail *? At the instant of his Death, what an affecting and glorious Example did he give of the Triumph of Conscience over All!

The grievous Corruptions which had been forced upon the Church from the time of *Constantine*†, and, more especially, the shocking Despotism then erected, and successively made use of to maintain them (a Despotism which presumptuously superseded the Authority of *Christ* himself), naturally brought on a lasting Scene of confusion, rancour, and bloodshed — put a dead stop to the former *uniform* Progress of the Gospel, and split the members of the Church into parties and Sects innumerable.

- * “ When Cruelty the fun’ral pyre uprear’d,
- “ And bound Religion there, and fir’d the base.”

SHENSTONE.

† Some of them, had been gaining Influence among the Learned, long before, and others were foretold. — See 2 Thess. ii, 3—11; 1 Tim. iv, 1—3. These passages are *Prophetic*, otherwise, they are so descriptive, that one might have expected they would have prevented such depravities. Unhappily another Authority than that of *Scripture*, gradually took place, and, at length, despised all opposition. The Effects are well known.

The Christian Religion may be likened to a capacious, unsullied, majestic River (issuing and increasing from a living Source), which, while flowing unobstructedly in its natural Channel, preserves its great utility, clearness, and serenity : but if its proper Course be violently impeded, it divides irregularly into various inferior streams, and these, tinged with the different soils through which they pass, lose their former purity, usefulness, and dignity.

Thus much I will venture to predict, That in whatsoever Christian Country, the People shall be indulged without exception, in the Free Exercise of their *Religious Principles**;—in the practice of *such* as they themselves, after a calm and serious Inquiry, shall *Believe* to be inculcated in the Sacred Dispensations ; *that* Country will be the *First* (and Great Britain bids fair for it) that will be permanently united on the Firm Basis of the *Gospel* and Reason. And though men may not agree in *every* particular, or in *non-essentials*, all *material* deviations will, however, purge themselves by degrees, or be

* This observation is positively restricted to *Religious Principles*, purely and conscientiously such ; *i. e.* such as are, in themselves, abstracted from any worldly or Political motives whatsoever.

soon expunged by the unshackled Efforts of serious and attentive Minds : whereas Restraint and Persecution of all kinds, Experience has taught us, serve only to inflame Prejudices and Fix them, and to render even Contradictions and Absurdities Sacred.

Yet, my Lord, I am very far from being unfriendly to an *Established* Form of Worship ; I conceive it hardly possible for Society to subsist without it. I believe it to be absolutely essential to the Welfare and Peace of the World, and full of general Utility ; Provided, that the fundamental Principles of this Establishment are grounded Solely and Clearly on the *Scriptures**.

* If this Rule were not only *Professed*, but also truly and unequivocally *Observed* (not *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*) ; our National Church would then be the most Pure, and, in consequence, the most eligible *Establishment* on earth. *So be it.*

If some of the present Doctrines of the Church be found Mistaken or Erroneous, it would be very unreasonable to conclude that they cannot be rectified without overthrowing her *Establishment*. May not the unseemly and dangerous corruptions of the Constitution be gently eradicated, and the Body, by that very means, be preserved in greater Health and Vigour ? Protestants, who fear the experiment, should remember that their Ancestors (who innocently handed down a mass of dark extraneous Principles, which have been the source of perpetual discord) were under the

This might well be expected from the true friends of the *Reformation*; more especially from our spiritual guides. For the generality of Men have neither Ability, Leisure, nor (it is to be feared in many instances) Inclination to plan for themselves any rational and well-adapted Form of Religious Worship; and the Positive Necessity of preserving a constant and well-ordered Attention to the ALMIGHTY, must be obvious to All Mankind; as it most certainly is, and must for ever be, the object of highest concern to all rational Beings. Still there is no sort of necessity to *Constrain* men (*we not having dominion over their Faith: 2 Cor i, 24*) to join in any particular Mode of Worship whatsoever: this is much better left freely to their own Consciences, to that inextinguishable Light of God which is placed in the breast of every man. Nevertheless we may rest *assured*, that the Form which is found by Experience to be the Clearest, the most Rational, and, espe-

Domination of the Church of Rome; and that the first *Reformers*, in the more recent times of our forefathers, although they had the *Fan in hand*, from the want of a free and complete Investigation (which, perhaps, was not allowed them), did not *thoroughly purge the floor*. Indeed, their Principle was, that the *Reformation* should proceed, not by violent or hasty measures, but quietly and by degrees. Yet little or nothing has been done since their time.

cially, the most consonant to the plain Doctrines of the Scriptures, will at length prevail over all others; and be *Directly* and *Cordially* embraced by all those who are truly Pious, Discerning, and Learned:—and it is well enough known what effect this would naturally have on the Commonalty.

Neither do I apprehend, my Lord, that the Difficulty of Establishing such a Liturgy, *expressly Scriptural*, as is here wished, is by any means so great as is usually pretended. In so important a step doubtless Precipitation should be avoided; and Wisdom would adopt the most persuasive and convincing measures. Respect is moreover due to Public Opinion. But are these considerations really sufficient to prevent for ever the accomplishment of so salutary a Work*? Did our first *Reformers* run no hazard in the cause of Truth? The advances which they made towards the purification of our Religion were great; and the completion of what they began, is, therefore, comparatively, easy to their descendants. Our present Book

* “At least I should think it would be right to run some risk, and place some trust in the Providence of God rather than let errors of any consequence remain.” Dr. Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, as quoted by Mr. Lindsey, *Apology*, p. 2.

of Common Prayer is filled, in general, with Noble and Exalted forms of Service, and, in order to make them highly satisfactory to all truly Religious men, want only to be purged from those Expressions which are little understood, or, so far as they may be understood, are evidently inconsonant to the general tenor of the Bible, and repugnant to the natural suggestions of our own Consciences.

For instance : In several, though not in all, of our present Forms (which will, I believe, be matter of no small astonishment to Posterity), we find the Dominion and Government of the Universe ascribed to *Three divine Persons* ; really *different**, but *Each* of them *Equal* in all Perfections, who, it is declared, *Live and Reign together* ; and *They* are, accordingly, Glorified and Worshipped by Christians in a *distinct* manner, and under *Discriminating* Titles. Surely this (notwithstanding any *qualifying* clause) must appear, to every common Understanding, plain *Tritheism*†; and the great

* "They are so distinguished (as Archbishop Secker "expressed himself), that no one is the other."—See Mr. Lindsey's *Apology*, p. 198.

† If it had not appeared so to the writer, his fellow Christians would not have been troubled with his sentiments. It seems extremely difficult if not impossible to distinguish

question is, Whether such *Worship* be fairly established on the Principles of right Reason, or of *Revelation*? If on *pure Revelation*, as some will assert, and therefore, they say, is to be believed and practised without further Inquiry; then surely it behoves them to point out where such *distinct* Invocations and Petitions are enjoined in the sacred Volume, as we find in the *Litany*, &c. — some very clear *Examples* in this case (of all others the most interesting) should be produced from *the Bible*; in which we might plainly see, that *Divine Worship* is Expressly and Separately offered (and their Titles specified), to *God the Father*, and to *God the Son*, and to *God the Holy Ghost*; as we find is now done in our Churches; otherwise, to what pur-

between *Tritheism* and the present *Orthodoxy*. Dr. Jortin, speaking of a set of men, who appeared about the latter end of the 6th century, says, “Then also arose the Sect of “*Tritheists* (for so they were called), who taught that the “Father, Son, and Spirit, were Three coequal distinct Beings, “who partook of one common *undivided* Nature. Joannes “Philoponus is accounted by many to have been the Author “of this Sect.”—*Rem. on Eccles. Hist.* vol. iv, p. 419. If we were all to become *professed Tritheists*, and to think ourselves perfectly right in so being; I do not see how we could then express our faith more accurately than is already done in the beginning of the *Litany*, and in some other models; to which Philoponus himself could have made no Objection.

pose is it to exclaim against serious men, who, wearied with perplexing Inferences, often drawn from dubious premises, think it more secure, as well as their duty, to take the plain and general sense of the Bible as their only guide; and who trust that nothing is neglected therein, that is most acceptable to God, and conducive to their Salvation. If the received Forms of Supplication, and *Divine Worship*, just mentioned, were scriptural and proper, or necessary, it is most reasonable to conclude that we should have certainly found them (as being of highest importance) not doubtfully, but very Explicitly delivered and enforced by the sacred writers Themselves, and used at least as often in the Bible as they are in our Prayer Books*.

* Many of the *Scripture Forms* have been already pointed out. *Elucidation*, p. 85, 202, &c. How do the doxologies which end many of the Church *Prayers* and *Collects*, accord with the Conclusion of our Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi, 13); or with his Thanksgiving (Luke x, 21)? In several instances, indeed, the *Prayers* and *Collects* of the Liturgy appear Inconsistent with each other, some being *Trinitarian* and some *Unitarian*. — See Note (a) p. 258. Dr. Priestley has justly observed, that the *Evening Service* requires but very little alteration to make it perfectly *Unitarian*; and that, if those few alterations were made, and the *Morning Service* modelled in conformity to the *Evening*, no objection could then remain. — See his excellent *Letters to the Dean of Canterbury*, Letter iii.

It is, therefore, much to be desired that those who are at all qualified, would search with temper into the grounds of their persuasions and Practice ; and not suffer themselves to be lulled asleep by the soothing power of Habit : or into an implicit reliance on even learned and worthy men ; who, it is very possible, may deceive themselves. For example : *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism* are equally reprobated and anathematized by those who believe themselves *Orthodox* : and yet, if these Gentlemen would attentively investigate their own Principles, they would find, in general, that they unavoidably incline either to *Tritheism* or *Sabellianism*. This circumstance will point out the danger of wavering, in the least, in the Belief of the Divine *Unity* absolutely taken ; and will also shew how strong are the motives which should persuade men to Charity and Forbearance with respect to Religious Opinions ; lest Prejudice should hurry them on to condemn *themselves*, while they are censuring the Principles of others ;—not having thoroughly examined the tendency and consequences of their own.—Matt. vii, 3.

These considerations have had, and, I hope, always will have their proper weight with me. I thank God that Charity is no stranger to my feelings. I am from Experience taught to con-

sider the painful Difficulty of rooting out those Prejudices which have been instilled into us from our Infancy, and cherished, without suspicion, as the indisputable tokens of a true Faith. I greatly rejoice in the certainty, that very large allowances will be made by our most Wise and Merciful Creator, for all our unavoidable Errors. As to Errors which are ascribable to negligence, or want of due attention in those who have acquired the means and the Power of correcting them; in whatsoever degree *such* may remain among Men, it is certain that the Simple and Illiterate are not directly chargeable therewith. Let Them be answerable for Mine, says the unlettered Husbandman, under whose Conduct I approach the Altar.

WITH all reasonable allowances for the gross Ignorance and Darkness of former Centuries, and the Prejudices they have left upon us; it yet is wonderful and mortifying, that the *proper Object* of Religious Worship should not have been long since irreversibly *Fixed*; and maintained not only by a few, but by all Thinking and Learned Men. Because, not only the general tenour of Revealed Religion, but also *Universal Nature* proclaims the great truth of the *Unity of the Deity*.—The *Similarity* of

Construction in the Greater Bodies around us : The “ nice *Dependencies*” preserved in all the Lesser :—in a word, the whole visible Creation discovers to human Reason, *One* uniform connected Design throughout : and demonstrates to reflecting Beings, that All Things were formed by *One Mind* ; that they are universally the Effects of the *Same great Cause* ; and, from their invariable Evolutions, are certainly and constantly under the very same Direction. God has taken care that we should have more reasons than one to believe them to be so ; and, I think, He has interwoven the Truth of His *Unity* in our very Nature, if we would attend to its operations ; at least he has enabled us to detect the most subtile deviations from that fundamental Article. I shall endeavour to give proof of this by a familiar instance : But I beg leave to introduce it rather as an accessory circumstance, than as a necessary Argument ; for after what has been produced in the Elucidation, and by *Others*, such assistances, I conceive, are but little wanted. It may be just observed, that what follows is not merely Speculative, but may be rather called *Experimental*, and will serve to shew that, from the limited Nature of the human Intellect, the present Doctrines incline us directly to *Polytheism*.

WHENEVER a Multiplicity of *Objects* are presented to the Mind, we find it necessary, in order to contemplate with any accuracy, to confine ourselves to *one*, and drop all the rest. A consequence ever unavoidable while the *Thinking Principle* is closely engaged. And hence it arrives, that the *Unity* of God forces itself upon us, in the Act of Devotion, from the *Indivisibility of Thought*. For we may observe, that, when we address ourselves *intently* in Prayer, we find it impossible to *Fix* our Meditation absolutely on more than *One* Object of Worship at the same moment. All others are neglected in the instant, and cannot enter the Mind without confusing and dissipating the Attention. This alone plainly shews, that the mental Faculties are not calculated to attend *Fixedly* to more than *One* Object. We may, indeed, *Associate* Three or more different Things or Persons in Idea, and then consider them in *One Collective* view; but this doth not destroy their *Individuality*; and, when we would contemplate any one of these Objects with Precision, we must dismiss the Combination. Or we may *Blend* three or more distinct Things or Subjects together in Idea, and then consider them in the Aggregate as *One*; but besides that this is a mere work of the Imagination, it would be held

both dissatisfactory and dangerous with respect to the *Trinity*; because we are expressly enjoined, in our present received Doctrines, to preserve the *Distinction* of the *Three Persons*, and acknowledge Them to be not only *Separate*, but also *Equal* Objects of Prayer and Thanksgiving. Notwithstanding this, in the solemn Acts of Devotion, the Mind betrays an *Election* for one or the other: and this preference, we find, is naturally and generally given to *God*, the Father Almighty *Himself*, and every other Object is excluded from the Mind *at the time*. For *He* incessantly arises in the Collected Soul, and Fills it. Thus the Great Truth of the *Unity* of the Deity, seems to have been implanted by *Him* in our Nature, and the Mind of man (with which it is in perfect concord), in its most serious and attentive moments, is necessarily led to acknowledge it*.—In praying to, or Glorifying the Trinity *in their Turns*, we still give the Precedence to the FATHER; but, by a positive

* Notwithstanding the Polytheism of the Heathen, it is certain, from their own writings and monuments, that the Belief of a *Supreme God*, naturally prevailed amongst them, and was sometimes *openly* testified.—See Acts xvii, 22, 23. Most of them, indeed, conceived that *He* was too Great, or too far Removed to attend to men, or their Supplications. We are obliged to *Revelation* for the complete cure of this most discouraging Apprehension.

Distinction in their *Persons*, and in our *Worship*, we unavoidably destroy the very Notion of *One only God*, and, as I apprehend, overthrow the Great Basis of Revealed Religion.

What will naturally follow from these observations is this: That as the Indivisibility of Thought will not permit us to Pray *Fixedly* to more than *One* Object at the same time, *for the very attempt to Divide the Attention confuses it*; therefore we are compelled, if we hold to the *Athanasian System*, to invoke, and Worship the *Three Persons* of the Trinity in a *separate* manner, as we find is done*. Thus when we Worship the *Father*, we Adore a Person *different* from the Son, or the Holy Ghost: and when we Worship *These*, we adore two Persons both *different* from the *Father* and from each other. For, howsoever They may be Connected, Their *Persons* are to be preserved *distinctly* in the Mind, and Their Worship, of course, to be *distinct* also. Now, under these circumstances, it appears impossible, from the very Nature of Thought, to free ourselves from the Idea of their being *Three distinct Gods*. For since we cannot Divide our *Attention* (which if we could would be the highest disrespect to the Person

* In the *Litany*, in many of the Collects, &c.

meant to be adored), it must be always *Changed* with the *Object* of our Worship; and then it inevitably follows, that every Other must be Neglected *at the time*; and *these are exactly the Consequences with all Polytheism whatsoever*: from which, therefore, I humbly apprehend, it is extremely difficult to Distinguish the present System. But, on the other hand, If we *Blend* the *Three Persons* together, and consider Them as *One* and the *Same* Intelligent Being; then the Athanasian hypothesis is destroyed, and any *Distinct* or *Discriminating* Worship appears totally Superfluous and Contradictory.

I beg that I may not be misunderstood in making these reflections: They are not brought forward from any vain desires of Disputation, but are intended in support of those passages in the *Bible* which render *the Worship of God Almighty* so easy to the Mind, by plainly and positively declaring that He is *One*, and that *He will not give His peculiar Glory to another**.

* Unless the *respective rights* of the *Three Divine Persons* of the (supposed) *Coequal Trinity* were clearly ascertained in *Revelation* (which is silent on this head), how should men discharge their *proper* Duties to them; How should *men judge* when, or on what Occasion, it would be most just and beneficial to address the one in Prayer or Thanksgiving, and when the others? The serious Mind, anxious to

A Violation of these *Sacred Principles* of Nature and Revelation made way for the Introducing, by degrees, all the Idolatry found in the Church of Rome.

I have never been able to meet with any Exposition of the Athanasian system (as it is called) that seemed at all satisfactory: on the contrary, even the best of those which I have seen, all appear to me to be intermixed with perpetual and inevitable *Contradictions*:—How is it possible for the most gifted Mind to avoid them, while it is endeavouring to maintain a System which professes to abhor the Idea of *Three Gods*, and yet confidently asserts *Three All-Perfect and Different Objects of Divine Worship*!—It cannot be alleged, “that these

observe the Respect due to *Each*, is in dread of giving Offence to one or other by some *Neglect*: And, if we address Them all as *One*, then the *Personalities* are lost or confounded. St. James, by his assertion that *every good and every perfect Gift cometh from the FATHER* (James i, 17), and St. Paul, by instructing us to *give thanks always for all things unto God, even the FATHER* (Eph. v, 20), have made this point (on the *Athanasian Principle*) still more embarrassing. But, indeed, if we drop the Athanasian scheme, and take our Lord's clear directions and Example (Matt. vi, 9; xi, 25; John xi, 41; xvi, 29), or those of his Apostles, then the Mind is relieved, and all anxiety and Distraction are immediately at an end.

" Things are a *Mystery*. - For the *most evident*
 " *Contradictions* are not a whit more *Mysterious*
 " than the *most evident Truths**."

It is not at all surprising, therefore, that we should find the Writers in support of This System; from the earliest period of its Institution to the present day, notwithstanding their Abilities, continually at variance with themselves, and confusing their own faculties and those of their readers, whenever they touch upon the Subject.

A Learned Writer, of high rank in the Church, has lately declared, as his Belief, " that there must be *Differences* in the *Three* " *Persons* of the Trinity, and gradual *Subordi-* " *nation*." Yet, in the same breath, he insists that *They* are strictly *One Being*, the *same God*, and *Equal* in all Perfections. Here we find, that *Difference* and *Identity*, *Subordination* and *Equality*, are made synonymous terms. Is not this illustrating the Athanasian Creed by the Creed of Athanasius? Indeed the tenets just mentioned are hardly so guarded as those of this famous Creed, and, while words retain their acknowledged meaning, such modes of

* Dr. Samuel Clarke.

Expression are altogether as unintelligible or contradictory as the Edict on which they are founded. The same learned Author has likewise suggested, that “ the *Differences* of the “ *Three Persons* can only consist in Their *Personal Properties*.” Now, if their *Personal Properties* be *Different*, this, indeed, sufficiently declares a *positive distinction*, and will shew them not to be the *same*, but *Three distinct Beings or Gods*; since a *difference of Properties* is the surest mark of *Distinction* between one Being and another.

Dr. *Waterland*, and other Writers of his Time, held, that *the Persons* of the Trinity “ are *Three real Persons*; Each of Them an “ *Individual Intelligent Agent*, and Each of “ Them *equally Supreme over All*; But as Subsisting in only *One Undivided and Inseparable “ Substance**, They constitute Altogether but “ *One God*.” By this last Notion, the Learned Doctor endeavoured to avoid the charge of *Tritheism*: But the *Salvo* is quite Fallacious. For,

* If this be true, it appears impossible (as has been frequently observed) that *One only* of these *Three Persons* should have been *Incarnate*, Without the *other Two*. But under the Idea of *Mystery*, men have been taught to believe manifest *Inconsistencies*.

Three Divine Persons, or *distinct Intelligent Agents*, Each possessing equally Supreme Power, Dominion, and Dignity, are certainly *Three Gods*; “*Three Gods in Person*” (says the excellent Dr. *Clarke*), whether They all Subsist in *One Substance* (if that can be), or in *Three Substances*. Because it is the *Intelligent Agents*, the *Divine Persons Themselves*, that we have to Attend to, and not the mere *Substance* in which They may be supposed to Exist. Their *Individuality* is not allowed to be Destroyed by Their Subsisting in only *One Substance*. Hence it follows of Necessity, that all proper *Trinitarians* hold *Three distinct Objects* of *Supreme Worship*, which, in common sense, are *Three equal Gods*. But surely the *Derivation* of the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, from the *Self Existent FATHER*, as From an *Efficient Who* is (Confessedly) *Wholly Independent*, sufficiently shews the real and necessary *Subordination* of the *Two Former* (supposing the *Holy Spirit* to be a *distinct Person*); and, therefore, to Maintain, as it appears to be done in the *Athanasian Creed*, and by many Writers to this day, that the *Three Divine Persons* (although *Two* of Them are allowed to be *Derived*, and the *Other* to be *Absolutely Undersived*, yet) are *Coequal*; and, also, that these *Three Individuals* constitute Altogether but *One* and the *Same*

GOD, or *Supreme Governor*; is to Maintain (as it seems to me) one of the most Palpable of all *Contradictions*.

Ingenious Men have endeavoured (doubtless often from very upright motives) to qualify and support this incongruous Doctrine, by deep comments and laboured Interpretations. Every passage throughout the Bible, that affords the most distant colour of an Argument, has been laid hold of and forced into the Service *. But

* One of the most plausible and commonly urged is that found in John xx, 28, where the Apostle Thomas, convinced of the Resurrection of Jesus, cries out, *My Lord and my God*. Probably an *Exclamation* of astonishment and joy, like that which any one would be apt to utter on the sudden Appearance of a much-loved Friend, who had been absolutely given up as *Dead*;—My good God! My gracious God! would be natural expressions on such an affecting occasion. Or, the Apostle's short emphatic Apostrophe might comprise an acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus and his *Resurrection*, and also of the manifest Power and Goodness of God, by a quick exulting address to Each. But whatever Thomas might have meant, allowance should be made for the violent commotion he must have felt: and we should attend to the context. St. John almost immediately adds,—*these (signs) are written that ye might believe that Jesus is THE CHRIST, the SON of God*. Observe also ver. 17, to which the *usual construction* of the words of St. Thomas cannot be reconciled. Some have therefore supposed that this Apostle, in the words above, called Christ *God*, in the

their efforts, hitherto, have not been able to eradicate the Doubts, and heal the Divisions, which have unhappily so long prevailed on a Subject in which Religion is so directly Interested. The searching out mystical meanings in Scripture, and deducing far-fetched conclusions from passages that may be somewhat obscure, appears to me to be seeking Darkness rather than Light; an endless unprofitable undertaking, making an Enigma of the Bible, and, consequently, productive of great and dangerous Confusion; as is plain from the strange and contrary Opinions which have arisen from time to time, from this way of construing the sacred Writings. Surely it would be better to recede from this precarious unsettled mode of explication, and not give such implicit Faith to Those who think themselves keen enough to see even beyond the Truth itself;—Who, while they are displaying their Penetration, “hang *Millstones* “needlessly about the Neck of Religion*,” and

Inferior acceptation.—Compare Heb. i, 8, 9, with John xx, 17. That St. Thomas could not intend to call *Christ*, God, in the *Proper* or *Highest* sense, is indeed evident enough, from our Lord’s reply to him:—“*Thomas, because thou hast “Seen me,”* &c. Now the Apostle must have known, that *no man hath Seen God at any time, nor can see Him.*

* Dr. Clarke.

sink it into an Abyss of *Darkness that may be felt.*

WITH respect to the Important Point before us, namely, *the Divine Unity*, the true way is indeed very far from being either Obscure or Intricate. We have but this alternative, *either to abide by the Strongest and Clearest Evidence, or follow that which is less Strong and less Clear.* It is hardly conceivable that any rational Being, were he left to himself, would hesitate upon which to choose*. Every serious and sensible Christian would, above all things, be most happy to be Clear in his Religious Creed, as he must feel and own that, in general, no solid Virtues, no rational Faith, nothing above a Clouded Piety, can be expected in Men who Profess a Religious System, the fundamental Principles of which, they ingenuously confess, they cannot Understand. May not such Men, without much presumption, be justly said to *Worship they know not what?* and while they remain in this doubtful and confused state, the

* "Every Opinion concerning a Point of Revealed Religion, ought to be looked upon as having just so much more or less Certainty, and to be treated accordingly, in Proportion as it is built either upon *More* and *Plainer*, or upon *Fewer* and *Obscurer* Texts."—Dr. Clarke, Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 240.

influence of Religion, on their Minds, must be feeble, wavering, and, in a great measure, fruitless; and this observation we see verified in fact;—too often even among the most distinguished Characters.

“Faith,” saith one who *being dead yet speaketh*, “must be founded upon Reason, or it must be fanatical Credulity. There is no medium*.” I can see no objection to this conclusion, since we cannot pretend to judge of the meaning of the word of God, without an equitable use of the Faculties He has been pleased to confer upon us; chiefly, perhaps, for the very purpose in question;—the Investigation of Religious Truth. And it will be granted, that we meet with some passages in Scripture, which demand an exertion of the rational powers; otherwise, even the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* will stand good. How is it, then, that many (Protestants) will reject all arguments from *Reason*, if they happen to contradict *any* long established Opinions; although these Opinions have never yet been clearly shewn to be the genuine offspring of the *Bible*; but, on the contrary, are vehemently suspected, from their dissonance, of having sprang from a very different

* Dr. Jortin.

source? It is not readily conceivable how such persons can suppose that they act *Conscientiously* in this matter; For, *Reason* and *Conscience* are so closely allied, that it is a difficult point to distinguish them. The latter (when under no false or distempered Influence) seems to be no other than the former, Stimulated by Reflection. Those, therefore, who, under an appearance of humility, would give up *Reason*, must be content to part with *Conscience* also; and then, indeed, it would be hard to say how far worldly interest, credulity, or prejudice might operate.

Now, my Lord, without pretending to relinquish an Invaluable Gift, which, in all other cases, we should deem it an absurdity to relinquish; and without continuing to insist on those recondite Doctrines, which, if they were at all Explicable, are allowed to be beyond the Comprehension of the greater part of Mankind, and, of course, conduce little to *Edification*;—Suppose we were to go back to the Simplicity of the Gospel? To that humble, unassuming *Practice*, which was held sacred by Christians in the *earliest* ages*, and derived *immediately* from the purest source of Instruction:—Suppose, instead

* Authorities of Men, or of *Councils*, are indeed Nothing, when Inconsistent with, or Opposed to *Scripture*; but when

of destroying His Supremacy as far as in us lies,
we were to Adore the *One God and Father of*

they evidently Agree with Scripture, they will have their due weight.

“ *The Church,*” says Irenæus, “ *offers up her Prayers to God Almighty, through Jesus Christ.*”—Lib. iv, cap. 33.

“ The third Synod of Carthage decreed, on purpose to prevent all Confusion in Divine Worship, and agreeably to the constant Practice of the whole Primitive Church; that when the Priest stands at the Altar, he should Always direct his Prayer to the FATHER.”—See Dr. S. Clarke’s Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 350.

“ The Lord’s Prayer teaches us, that we should Pray to God ONLY, and to Him as our Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”—Archbishop Wake’s Comment. on Church Catechism, p. 130, 131.

“ In the first and best Ages, the Churches of Christ, directed All their Prayers, according to the Scripture, to God Only, through the alone Mediation of Jesus Christ.”—Bishop Bull; see Mr. Lindsey’s Apology, p. 147—151, and 176.

“ The Practice of the Primitive Church in the Three first Centuries was, to direct their Prayers uniformly to God, the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ.”—Dr. S. Clarke, Works, fol. edit., vol. iv, p. 384.

“ This is the True Religion, the Worship of the True God, by and through his Son Jesus Christ.”—Ibid. p. 288.

How adverse, from these Scriptural Rules, are the desultory Forms of the present Liturgy, wherein we find our Devotions so frequently shifted from one Object of Worship to Another!

All, Who is ABOVE All; to Worship Him and Pray to Him alone, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ? Wherein should we Err? Pardon me, my Lord, a moment, while I ask whether our Ecclesiastic Governors will allow this to be strictly consonant to the Sacred Precepts or not? Whatever may be their Speculative Opinions, They surely cannot deny it. But Where, then (may it be asked), do we find so clear and so respectable Authority for the Worship of a (coequal) TRINITY? Neither, it seems, is this word, nor this Worship to be found in our Bibles. Notwithstanding the ingenious Zeal of later Ages, Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, appear to have been wholly Strangers to so Complicated a System. Why, therefore, do we refuse ourselves the beneficial Happiness of giving HIM (to Whom we remain Indebted for every Blessing; even for Christ himself) the peculiar Honour due unto His Glorious Name, Who is the One Everlasting God and Benevolent Parent of the Universe? Hath not Christ and his Apostles, the holy Prophets*

* THOU, even Thou art LORD alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee!—Neh. ix, 6, &c.

of God, nay, even *God Himself*, plainly taught and encouraged us to do this? Let the World impartially examine the Sacred Volume, collect the Evidence, and say whether this Injunction be *Reiterated* or not. If it be, with what confusion shall we shortly appear before His Face, with the Bible, perhaps our own Consciences, and even the whole surrounding Creation Witnesses against us! If, indeed, we have not erred Wilfully, or through Negligence, our Pardon is certain:—but our Confusion and Regret may very possibly remain with us.

AFTER all, it must be confessed, that such endeavours as these, to mark the plainest defects and incongruities of the present System, and to persuade a Reformation of them, will, in a great measure, be vain and ineffectual, while some are still determined to support the most manifest deviations at all Events, and others are so little inclined to Attend to what is said against them. Even the great number of Those to whom the care of our holy Religion is more immediately consigned, will not condescend to look into the Publications that are offered to their perusal, and which, at least in many instances, in the most disinterested manner, point out the stumbling-blocks which lay in their own way, and evidently Obstruct the best endeavours

to fix the Religion of Christ in the hearts of men, and to extend its benign and cheerful Influence over those Nations that are still walking in darkness and delusion.

“ But, to say the plain truth, Christians in general seem not to be *perfectly* qualified for this undertaking (the conversion of Mahometans, &c.), nor will be so, till Metaphysical and Scholastical Divinity is either discarded from the Christian System, or at least is allowed not to be essential to Christianity, nor necessary to be received as a condition to Salvation.”—*Jortin's Rem. on Eccles. Hist.* vol. v, p. 460.

Let it, however, be observed that, although, for the above and other reasons, the Unitarians think they have the most powerful motives for recommending their Religious Principles to the World, yet, they neither expect nor wish that they should be generally adopted until full time be given for a complete Investigation. *They, therefore, ardently desire a strict and fair examination of them.* The sharper the trial, the more firmly they will stand in future;—or, if they should fail essentially, the Unitarians themselves, for their own safety, should be the first to abandon them. In short, If the harmony

of their tenets with the divine Scriptures, be not more clear and irrefragable to impartial Judgment, than that of their Opponents, no pious Christian would wish for any change. But it is with reason believed, that the want of comparing, with *unbiased* pains, the Unitarian and the Trinitarian Principles with the great and general Aim of the Bible*, has occasioned the decay of the former, and the long duration of the latter. The cause of Truth is as much injured and protracted by the Inattention and Indifference of some, as by the Prejudices of others.

In such a situation of things, all that can be

* See Deut. xiii, 4; 1 Sam. vii, 3, 4; xii, 23, 24; 2 Sam. vii, 22; 1 Kings viii, 60, 61; 2 Kings xvii, 36; Dan. ix, 3—19; Luke iv, 8; Acts xiv, 15—17; Rom. xv, 6; 1 Thess. i, 9, 10. These texts, if the reader will turn to them, certainly, one should think, require no Explication or comment whatsoever: They might stand without other support, as an answer to a late very ingenious assertion, viz. that “the *Unitarians* have nothing to plead in their favour, but “*single* texts of Scripture, interpreted in a *figurative* manner!”—See 2 Sam. vii, and read *the whole Chapter*, or 1 Kings viii. In this last chapter only, there are above one hundred and forty instances in which God is continually addressed, or spoken of, as *One single Divine Person*. How can we, without the grossest prevarication, suppose that the *personal pronouns singular* intend more than *one Person*.

done by those who have the Honour of our *Heavenly Father*, the *Gospel of Christ*, and their own Peace and Salvation truly at Heart is, to declare openly (the time will come when they will be heard), wherein they humbly apprehend, Men have departed from *the Faith that was once delivered unto the Saints*: and far from invidiously attacking the tenets of others, and at the same time concealing their own, lest they also should be found equally defective;—The honest Professors of Christianity, putting away all bitterness of spirit, should deliver to the World their own principles with humility, but with firmness and sincerity;—freely offer them to the severest Scrutiny of rational Inquirers, and leave their merits and their Truth to be decided by the sacred Oracles of God. I shall therefore deliver, what I conceive to be, the Religious Principles of an *Unitarian Christian*.

ZEALOUS to walk in a plain and well enlightened Path, the Unitarian Christian, in contradiction to all the complex Systems of Human invention, maintains, that the All-Glorious GOD of the Universe is simply and absolutely ONE*. That there is no GOD (in the *proper* sense of the

* Deut. vi, 4; Mark xii, 29; 1 Cor. viii, 4, 6, &c.

term) WITH HIM*, nor LIKE HIM†, nor EQUAL to HIM‡: and, consequently, that *He* alone is the *True God*; that *He* alone is the Great Object of all Religious Adoration§. And it is further maintained, that it is altogether impossible, that the Prophets and Apostles, speaking as they did by divine Inspiration, could have asserted the *Unity* of God so Clearly and Positively as they have done (and without the least *exception* or *reserve*), unless it were *strictly* true; and incapable of any dangerous or Erroneous consequences whatsoever, when *directly* adopted by Mankind as a Principle most Sacred and Inviolable; as the Basis, as the *sine qua non* of True Religion ||.

* Deut. xxxii, 39.

† Isa. xlv, 9.

‡ Isa. xl, 25; xlv, 5.

§ Exod. xxxiv, 14; Matt. vi, 6, 9, &c.

|| With respect to the *Holy Spirit*, I beg leave to observe, that whenever the FATHER is Worshipped, the holy Spirit is included *in Him*: i. e. not adored as a *distinct* Person; since to make the holy Spirit a *distinct Person* from the *Father* is, I humbly apprehend, to make a *Distinction* without a real *Difference*. For the *holy Spirit*, from the *general* import of the sacred Writings (as has been shown in the *Elucidation*, from strong Evidence), is the Spirit of God, His *Divine In-*

The Son of God is deeply Reverenced by the Unitarian Christian, as his Mediator, High

fluence (a), or God Himself, who is indeed THE GREAT AND UNIVERSAL SPIRIT. And thus this Point appears to have been considered by Christ and his Apostles; otherwise, in order to prevent Error or Neglect, They certainly would have made a positive Distinction in Their forms of Worship and Glorification, between the Holy Ghost and the Father, If different and Equal Persons were meant. But No such distinct Worship is to be found in the Scriptures. (This alone discovers, that the Trinitarian Worship, as it is now practised, is an Innovation upon the sacred Doctrines.) There are some, indeed, who, struck with this circumstance, think, nevertheless, that, by the Holy Spirit may be meant a distinct and Subordinate Agent, though not an Object of Divine Worship. This notion, standing thus, may have no improper consequences (as the Spirit must be supposed to be under the Direction of the Supreme Being): But the above Opinion, it is humbly conceived, appears more consonant to

(a) And it is evidently sometimes Prayed for, *as such*, (though with no great appearance of *Consistency*) in the *Church Established*. Among other instances, see form of Absolution, Collects for Quinquagesima Sunday, 5th Sunday after Easter, 19th Sunday after Trinity, St. Barnabas, Prayers for the King and Royal Family, for the Clergy and People, that at the entrance of the Communion, &c. These Addresses, with many others, are absolutely Unitarian; they are made to God the Father *only*, through Jesus Christ, and the *Holy Ghost* (or *holy Spirit*) is prayed for, as a divine *Gift* of spiritual Graces.

Priest, and great Deliverer : Commissioned by the FATHER to lead Men into the knowledge of Him, *the Only true God*, and into the way of Life Eternal.—John xvii, 3. That, accordingly, the Doctrines and Precepts of our Saviour and his Apostles, are to be esteemed as the unalterable Rules of the Christian's Life ; to be strictly adhered to, and punctually obeyed ; to be fixed in his Heart, and uniformly manifested in his Actions. That not Obedience only, but also Love, Gratitude, Honour*, and Veneration, are due to *our Lord Jesus Christ* in a very high degree from all Mankind. And, lastly, that, as his Disciples, we are authorized and encouraged to make use of his *Name* on all occasions in our Worship of ALMIGHTY GOD ; to whose Divine Majesty we thus approach by our only Intercessor, *Through* whom all the Blessings of the Gospel descend.

It is upon this solid Foundation that the Unitarian Christian rests his Hope : Worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth, and rejoicing

the *general* tenour of holy Writ. And it seems a very unsatisfactory Expedient to single out a few (perhaps doubtful) passages, and oppose them to the great Body of the Scriptures.

* *Every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, To the Glory of God the Father.*—Philipp. ii, 11 ; Acts ii, 36.

in Christ Jesus. For to us there is but One God, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord * Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.—1 Cor. viii, 6†. The simplicity of the foregoing Creed enables it to be clearly understood by all Men; and the

* And one Lord (i. e. "One MEDIATOR," says Dr. Clarke, one Lord-Mediator, and HEAD of the Church), Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. ii, 5.

† St. Paul is here *professedly* Distinguishing the True God (see ver. 4, 5, 6), most evidently confining the Godhead to the one Person of the FATHER. To elude this open declaration, some men, unable to subvert the force and accuracy of the Apostle's Expression, make no scruple of annihilating their own Principles at once, and boldly assert that the term *Father*, here signifies *all the Three Persons* of the Trinity! (Although the *Father* is pointedly distinguished in this very passage, as in numberless others, from Christ and all other Beings whatever.) Thus "the *discriminative* appellation of an Individual," or a Name *purposely* adopted for *distinction*, is made to infer *no real Distinction at all*; and men have no way left them to express their true meaning: The *Father* signifies the *Son*, and the *Son* the *Father*, &c. (*Sabellianism*.) Those who can persuade themselves to talk thus, absolutely confound the fundamental Principles of language, and set all rational Argument at defiance.

The Apostle, indeed, makes *no* mention here of the *holy Ghost*, which it is *more* than probable he would have done, on so Interesting and decisive an occasion, if by the *holy Spirit* were meant a *Person*, *Different* from the *Father*, and His *Equal*.

Records, on which it is directly founded will probably incline those, who believe in Revelation, to think that it contains a glorious Truth.

But if there be any thing materially wrong in it, or absurd, or contrary to the plain Doctrines of the Gospel ; in the Name of God, let it be pointed out : for no man in his senses, I think, would Err in his Religion if he could possibly avoid it. I am sure, my Lord, that if I (who am most willing to learn) could have been by any assistance satisfied, that the *Worship* of a *Trinity* is as plainly commanded, or Exemplified in *Scripture*, as is the Worship of the *One God and Father of All* ; I should have been saved from an anxiety of Mind which I am unable to express.

Am I, or is any Man blameable for such anxiety ? Is it weakness ? An Indifference to RELIGION and its Truths, is Destruction in every sense of the word : It is the real Source of all the Moral Corruptions that infest the Human Race. This Indifference to Religion (if it does not proceed from the most thoughtless Stupidity) must arise from a disbelief of its *Principles* ; or from a Persuasion that whether its *Precepts* are obeyed or not, it will be of equal Consequence to us. It is enough, I hope, to observe to the

most negligent Reader, that this last opinion leads directly to *Atheism*, and at once destroys the very notion of an Omniscient and Just Governor of the Universe. As to a disbelief of the leading Principles of any particular System, it behoves the virtuous among Men to shew, if it be possible, that such Incredulity has no Rational foundation. Every method should be tried, every fair Argument brought forward, to remove impediments that may render the paths of Religion clouded or intricate, which, above all things, it is to be wished, should be most clear.

CHRISTIANITY, in its natural and most amiable Form, presents nothing to the Mind of man that is gloomy or contradictory: It utters nothing but Peace and Comfort to the Soul; and will be found to agree with Reason in all her genuine Principles. The Light of the Gospel of Christ kindly blends itself with the Light of Reason, and increases its Lustre; and, whatever Divines may have formerly held, it is this Union that gives solid satisfaction to the human Heart.

I am not allowed to hope, from the aspect of the present day, that I shall live to see any material Reformation in our forms of Worship.

But of this I am confident, that such a Reform will in future take place*. I apprehend that the Truth of the Sacred Writings is directly engaged in this Issue. Until the Gospel is preached in its original Purity, the Nations of the Earth, we see, are not likely *to become the Kingdoms of the LORD, and of His Christ*. And yet, so sure as the Bible is true, this great Event must arrive, and the *Prophecies* be Fulfilled. *At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the*

* How can we possibly think, that the charitable and merciful Spirit of pure Christianity is properly retained in a *Church*, wherein we hear *Everlasting perdition* solemnly denounced, without any exception or qualification, against all those who do not (perhaps cannot) Believe exactly as *She* dictates? or rather, as some of the most violent Zealots were pleased to dictate in the darkest Ages. Surely *that Wisdom descendeth not from Above*, which first confounds the Understanding, and then leaves the most dreadful Curse on the very Doubts *itself* has raised!—Yet this seems to be the Wisdom, and this the Mercy which we find in a certain *Creed*.

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum!

The Creed alluded to would absolutely exclude from Salvation the Christian Fathers of *the first three centuries*; and all others who (believing themselves justified by the general tenour of the holy Bible) have, like them, held, or do now hold, that the Son and holy Spirit are at all *Inferior* to the *Almighty Father*.

holy One of Israel.—Isa. xvii, 7. Happy indeed will They be, who shall become the blessed Instruments of accomplishing these things! —By calling back the Christian Faith to its primeval Purity and Simplicity, and clearing it entirely from that heavy Cloud of Superstition and Error which has inwrapped it for Ages! A Departure from the Truth was plainly foretold*; and, although *the Sun of Righteousness* has happily arisen with brighter Rays on our Land, our Impurities are not yet exhaled: Their remains are conspicuous, and still mark the force and truth of the Prophecy.

The confining ourselves within the narrow Pale of our Forefathers betrays an inexcusable Indolence, and a manifest lukewarmness for the *further* propagation of the Gospel. It may be considered as a certain Fact, that the Wise and Benevolent Author of Nature, plainly intends (notwithstanding some partial exceptions), that the Rational part of his Creation shall not ultimately Decline; shall not become less enlightened; more ignorant and depraved; but shall assuredly move forward, by gradual steps, in the paths of useful Knowledge and Improvement. If this be granted, how contradictory to these

* 2 Thess. ii, 3—11; 1 Tim. iv, 1.

gracious designs doth it appear, that we should implicitly rely on our remote Ancestors for our present Opinions and Practice, and, by obstinately or supinely continuing on the same ground, contract all our Ideas within the circle of their Knowledge?

I believe, however, that this last is far from being now the prevailing Inclination. The necessary Distinction between sound Faith and thoughtless Credulity is no longer *Heretical*. I greatly rejoice when I reflect, that no inconsiderable number of our most respectable Clergy, not only conceive themselves to be bound in their Profession, by some very hard and illiberal Engagements of human construction, but, many of them, are also sensible, that some further Amendments in our Doxologies, and Forms of Worship, are become absolutely necessary: They justly think, that these may be rendered more generally unexceptionable and safe, *By reducing them to a more direct congruity with those of the Scriptures*. Were this measure strictly adopted, it must prevent all controversy and uneasiness, on the point in question (at least among the reasonable part of Mankind), so long as our holy Records are considered as the incontestable Rules of our Faith. It would be most Injurious to suppose, that those Reverend Gentlemen, who are zealous for so desir-

able a Reform, have not the welfare of Christianity as much at Heart as their Opposers. Their wishes can proceed from nothing but a watchful and conscientious attention to Religion, and a sincere love of it; with a conviction of its infinite Importance to the World when rightly understood: and they well discern, that, if such a step were taken, it would at once free the *Whole* from a weight of anxiety and vexation, which every honest Man would be happy to see them fairly rid of.

MY LORD, If what has been said should, upon the whole, appear worthy of any regard; The exalted Station in which Divine Providence hath been pleased to place your Grace enables you to direct the means of such Relief, in these most Important matters, as your Wisdom shall suggest. Your Lordship is undoubtedly well acquainted, that The Public attention is powerfully attracted towards the present Inquiry into the *True Object* of Religious Worship, a Subject surely the most Interesting that can engage the human Mind.—That the Inquirers into this momentous Article are numerous and respectable.—That the Foundations of our Faith are not now assailed by the shallow and contemptible disquisitions of Atheists and Libertines, but are searched into by Men whose Characters are unimpeachable, whose Abilities and Zeal, in

support of Christianity, are equally ardent and conspicuous, and who assuredly have their own inward quiet and salvation at heart (of which some of them have given the most unquestionable proofs), though the World may not have candour enough to allow that their endeavours reach further than to themselves. Whatever may be the Event of these Inquiries, this is certain, that they never could have arisen among such Men, if the *received* Doctrines had been clearly founded on the Scriptures and sound Reason.

“ Let us, therefore, be intent on studying the
 “ pure word of God; and careful to interpret it
 “ in such a manner, as may do most honour to
 “ its author; and at all times encourage a free
 “ and an impartial study of it. ’Tis now high
 “ time to do this, and to awake out of sleep,
 “ since our Reformation is much nearer than
 “ when we first believed: and it is to be wished,
 “ that we ourselves could be persuaded to ex-
 “ mine our own state;—That we were disposed
 “ to help and forward, rather than check the
 “ progress of every serious inquiry; and stop
 “ any further improvements in the knowledge of
 “ that, which of all things deserves and wants
 “ them most; rather than withstand a general
 “ reformation in Religion, by rigorously insist-
 “ ing on, and obtruding such things for doctrine,

“as are the commandments of men, and very
 “foreign to the essence of it; instead of either
 “entertaining that Antichristian kind of spirit,
 “which calls down fire from heaven on all who
 “don’t receive us; which delights in straight-
 “ening the way that leads to life, and shutting
 “up the kingdom of heaven against men; or
 “else incurring the woe denounced against those
 “hypocrites, who are desirous of lading men
 “with heavy burthens, and binding upon them
 “things which are too grievous to be borne;
 “and which they know, that none need touch
 “with one of their fingers.

“As we see the faults and follies of past ages,
 “a double woe will be to us, if, instead of tak-
 “ing warning by them, and avoiding the like,
 “we are resolved to tread the same steps, and
 “fill up the measure of our fathers*.”

* Late Bishop of *Carlisle’s* Considerations on the Theory
 of Religion, &c., p. 190, fifth edit.

It may not be amiss to observe, that the very same Max-
 ims are urged by some writers of the present times, against
 any *further* Reformation, that were made use of by the
 Catholics in the reign of Henry VIII, to stifle *Protestantism*
 in its birth.

The *then* Established Clergy, “supposed, as a thing cer-
 “tain, that the Religion professed before *Luther’s* appear-
 “ance, was the true Religion, and being without spot,
 “wrinkle, or the like, had no need of Reformation. Ac-

IF, then, your Lordship should, happily, be inclined to forward any proper measures for the further purifying our forms of Worship, in doing which, without doubt, the Christian Scriptures would be taken as the directive

“ cording to that principle, they thought the point was *not* “ to examine it at all, but to *compel* the Recusants or Heretics to conform. This was the constant Maxim long “ since followed by the Romish Clergy,” &c. A wretched device (not yet entirely dropped), which prefers *Hypocrisy* itself to *Non-Conformity*!—See Rapin, vol. i, p. 790.

“ Almost all the Churchmen who had any access to the “ Court, opposed the *Reformation*; and those who preached “ before the King, filled their Sermons with invectives “ against it.”—Ibid. p. 804. He (Henry VIII) was much extolled “ for his Zeal against the *Lutherans*,” who, it was maintained, “ were labouring to destroy the Church of “ *England*.”—Ibid. p. 792. The disciples of the famous *Wickliff* had been, long before, charged by the Clergy, with “ *entirely subverting Religion*.”—Ibid. p. 698. The Advocates for the *Divine Unity* are now stigmatised, by many, with the same crime.

Those illustrious men, Grosted (Bishop of Lincoln), Wickliff, Luther, Cranmer, and some others, the honoured Fathers of the *Protestant Church* (though not entirely purged from the stains of *Antichristianism*), overthrow the false assertions, errors, artifices, and self-interested Principles of their numerous Opponents, by a direct appeal to *Scripture* and to *Reason*, the only proper spiritual weapons of a Protestant; and, by the same means, what they left undone, will (for the safety and Reputation of the Church) in future be Completed.

Lights: It is then that the true Disciples of Christ *would rejoice with exceeding great Joy*: since such an Amendment could have no other end, than the ensuring the most durable Happiness to Mankind; by giving birth to that substantial Piety, wherein the Heart and the Understanding, also, sincerely Unite. And I am, with many others, grossly deceived, if the EPOCHÆ would not be as glorious for *your Grace*, through all Posterity, as it would be highly advantageous to Christianity. To take away the complicated Veil which has been thrown over the Gospel, and offer it, as it were, anew to Mankind, in all its genuine Beauty and Perspicuity; divested of the fallacious supports of human device, of delusive Obligations*, and Learned Subtilty:—this is *the mark we press toward* (Philipp. iii, 14) with a steady but peaceable spirit:—to that pure and all-diffusive Light, which, unobscured by earthly system, would *enlighten every man that cometh into the world*. “The more simple and unexceptionable a Religion is, the dearer will it be to those who understand it, and know what it is to

* “Men will *compel* others, not to think with them, for that is impossible, but to say they do, upon which they obtain full leave not to think or reason at all, and this is called *Unity*.”—Dr. Jortin’s *Rem. on Eccl. Hist.*, Preface, p. xxii, edit. 1751.

“enjoy it.” In the recovery of “such a Religion,” my Lord, “Charity would be a gainer, and Faith would be no loser, and it would be “an easier task to satisfy Doubters, to bring “over Infidels, and to re-unite Believers*.”

You would not want the ready assistance of many among the most Valuable and Learned of your Clergy, and you have this Peculiar advantage, that it would be impossible to charge your Grace, in such an important undertaking, with any Sinister views or Worldly motives whatsoever. May the same Almighty Being, who hath called you into your Eminent State in the Church, inspire you to do that which is right in His sight, and enable you to lead your extensive Flock in the true Paths of Righteousness and Peace.

I conclude this Letter with an earnest Prayer; That the God of Truth may condescend to guide and support All those who are labouring in its Cause: That CHRISTIANITY may flourish in its utmost extent: That Mankind may enjoy all those permanent Blessings, which may be expected from a steady Obedience to its *Divine Precepts*: And, especially, that we may never fail in our deepest Gratitude to HIM, from

* Ibid. p. xxxv.

Whom those Precepts were truly Derived*; nor in our sincerest Love to that benevolent Being who Delivered them. Now, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to HIM who is the FATHER of Mercies and the God of all Comfort, Be Glory, Adoration, and Gratitude in the Highest, to all Eternity. Amen.

I am, my Lord,

With the greatest Respect,

Your Grace's very Humble,

And most Obedient Servant,

JAMES GIFFORD,

Jan. 27, 1785.

* John vii, 16; xii, 49, 50; xiv, 24.

THE END.



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